



**Developing a  
Public Safety Telecommunicator Job Description  
May 2022**

## Acknowledgments

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA), National 911 Program, convened a working group of 911 professionals with a deep commitment to the individuals that are the first, first responders in any emergency. The Program provides the space to meet and the resources to assist these professionals to create the toolkit. The goal of this toolkit is to provide public safety answering point (PSAP)/emergency communications center (ECC) leaders and decision-makers with a framework to help ensure job descriptions, training programs, and operational documents adequately reflect the evolving expectations of the public safety telecommunicator. This document, entitled "Guidelines for Developing a Public Safety Telecommunicator Job Description," provides a framework for reviewing, updating, or creating a public safety telecommunicator job description to accurately reflect the roles and responsibilities of the position.

Thank you to the following industry experts who were integral in leading this effort and developing materials that will support future data-driven decisions of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), state and local 911 agencies, and state and local policymakers. Without their contribution of time and expertise, this document would not be possible.

- Andrea Shepard, MBA, Montgomery County Emergency Communications District, Texas
- April Heinze, ENP, National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- Chad Chewing, Livingston County Central Dispatch / 911, Michigan
- Dan Henry, NENA
- Daniel R. Morden, MSA, PEM, Gratiot County Central Dispatch Authority, Michigan
- Halcyon Frank, ENP, The Dispatch Lab
- Harriet Rennie-Brown, ENP, National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA)
- Jerry Eisner, RedSky Technologies
- Kevin Haight, Motorola Solutions, previously with Idaho State Police
- Mark Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Melissa Alterio, M.S., CPE, RPL, Cobb County Emergency Communications Department, Georgia
- Nathan Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Rosa Ramos, ENP, CMPC, Alameda County Regional Emergency Communications Center, California
- Roxanne VanGundy, ENP, RPL, Lyon County 911, Kansas
- Tony Leese, South East Regional Emergency Services Agency (SERESA), Michigan
- Ty Wooten, ENP, International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED), previously with NENA

# Table of Contents

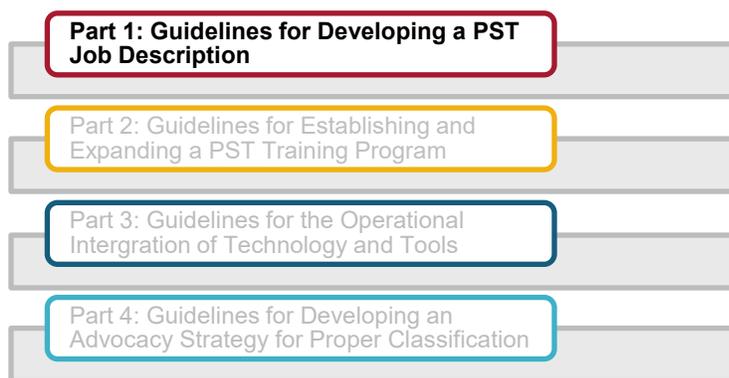
1	Call to Action .....	1
2	Background .....	2
2.1	Classification.....	3
2.2	The Decision to Not Reclassify .....	3
2.3	Moving Forward .....	4
3	The Expanded Role of a 911 Telecommunicator .....	4
3.1	Development of the Position .....	6
3.2	Transitioning Expectations .....	7
4	Developing Job Descriptions .....	8
4.1	PST Tasks .....	8
4.2	Enhance Professional Competence .....	12
5	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities .....	12
5.1	Certifications .....	12
6	Next Steps .....	13
	Appendix A – PST Responsibilities and Key Job Skills and Tasks .....	13
	Appendix B – Guidance on Creating a Job Description .....	19
	Appendix C – Model Job Description .....	25
	Appendix D – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographic.....	30

# 1 Call to Action

As a leader in an emergency communications center (ECC)<sup>1</sup>, it is most likely part of your responsibility to ensure the job descriptions that are released during the hiring process accurately reflect the roles and responsibilities of the telecommunicators you're looking to hire. This is an awesome and sometimes daunting responsibility as the job, we know, is ever-changing. With the migration to Next Generation 911 and the introduction of a multitude of technology that is present in an ECC, it seems nearly impossible to keep up.

However, because of the 2018 decision by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) not to reclassify the 911 telecommunicator/dispatcher, we know it is essential to keep up with these job descriptions. During the last process, the industry banded together and made an emotional appeal for reclassification; however, the one thing that was not provided to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) was the required data that provides the necessary evidence to reclassify telecommunicators in the BLS as a federal statistical survey.

This document, *Guidelines for Developing a Public Safety Telecommunicator Job Description*, is part one of a four-part toolkit that addresses the steps an ECC can take to prepare for the OMB reclassification efforts.



***This document is a call to action to evaluate, update and maintain your center's job descriptions to ensure it accurately reflects the current roles and responsibilities of the public safety telecommunicator (PST).***

<sup>1</sup> There is a trend across the United States that public safety answering points (PSAPs) are being referred to as ECCs. This document recognizes that both PSAPs and ECCs are committed to the same responsibility of answering and processing 911 calls for service.

## HISTORY

### Federal Classification

The United States (U.S.) Bureau of Labor Statistics, under the Department of Labor, is responsible for the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data.

“Occupations are classified based on work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education and/or training needed to perform the work.”

[[Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines, 2018 SOC \(bls.gov\)](#)]

### The Decisions to Not Reclassify

BLS ultimately was unable to reclassify because of the lack of objective, measurable data; thus, the 911 telecommunicator position remains classified under the Office and Administrative Support Occupation. The decision not to reclassify PSTs from the Office and Administrative Support Occupation to Protective Services was a blow to the industry and a campaign to increase the visibility of PSTs and their roles and responsibilities was undertaken.

### Moving Forward

It is in the best interest of the 911 community to assemble objective data and information that can be used for the reclassification of the PST by updating job descriptions, training programs, and written directives to accurately depict job duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the modern PST.

For more information on the Toolkit visit [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)

### Understand your job requirement

- Review your job duties and tasks
- Identify key component
- Align job descriptions with current ECC operations

### Engage your hiring authority

- Understand hiring roles
- Get to know specific requirements
- Develop a process to keep job descriptions current and updated
- Learn which platforms your hiring authority uses to recruit

### Seek advice from other ECC's

- Be creative, make your job description more appealing
- Review neighboring jurisdictions' job descriptions
- Conduct a pay scale and benefit comparison

### Review often and make changes

- Review the job description each time you are hiring
- Have current PSTs review the job descriptions
- Make changes as often as necessary to ensure accuracy

## 2 Background

Each year millions of calls are made to 911. The estimated 98,300<sup>2</sup> dedicated men and women who answer those calls are facing a time of great change as their careers, roles, and responsibilities move from a legacy environment to a Next Generation 911 (NG911) environment. Their roles in providing care include such tasks as:

- Helping to calm a terrified teenager hiding in a closet during a home invasion, while simultaneously providing information about the incident to first responders while they rush to the scene
- Directing a frightened caller on how to safely escape a burning building or take protective actions if they are trapped
- Providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions to a panicked parent holding a lifeless child

These dedicated professionals are trained to stay on the line with callers during emergent situations and provide a sense of calm in the worst times of callers' lives. However, these positions are in a clerical/administrative job category for classification and reporting purposes. Job descriptions for these professionals woefully lack capturing what telecommunicators do daily. In order to hire and retain those best suited for this increasingly complex career, the industry must regularly review and update job descriptions to better reflect the complexity of the position. Job descriptions should show a true acknowledgment and understanding of the current roles and responsibilities of a PST. This way, during the next review of classifications, auditors will be able to apply a process that will recognize that the classification for PSTs must be modified.

---

<sup>2</sup> Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers. Occupational Outlook Handbook. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/police-fire-and-ambulance-dispatchers.htm#tab-1>. Last accessed 01/09/2020.

## 2.1 Classification

The BLS, under the Department of Labor, is responsible for the SOC of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data.<sup>3</sup> The SOC is, first and foremost, a federal statistical survey. “The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) are charged with collecting and reporting data on total U.S. employment across the full spectrum of SOC Major Groups. Thus, for a detailed occupation to be included in the SOC, either the BLS or the USCB must be able to collect and report data on that occupation.”<sup>4</sup> “Occupations are classified based on work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education and/or training needed to perform the work.”<sup>5</sup>

The SOC is organized into a tiered system with four levels, ranging from major groups to detailed occupations. In the 2018 SOC, there were 23 major groups, 98 minor groups, 459 broad occupations, and 867 detailed occupations. The full 2018 SOC Manual can be found online at the [SOC website](#).

As part of its required regular review and revision, in 2014, the OMB created a committee to review revisions to the 2018 SOC. The Public Notice was met with requests from the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO), the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), and others to change the SOC for PSTs from the current 43-5031 (Office and Administrative Support Occupation – Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers) to 33-nnnn (Protective Services – Public Safety Telecommunicators). Many groups and individuals within the 911 community have argued that association with “office and administrative support” occupations are inappropriate and disrespects the work 911 telecommunicators do every day; it was seen as a slight in the industry.

## 2.2 The Decision to Not Reclassify

In July 2014, OMB issued an interim decision stating: “*The work performed is that of a dispatcher, not a first responder. Most dispatchers are precluded from administering actual care, talking someone through procedures, or providing advice. Moving the occupation to the Protective Services major group is not appropriate and separating them from the other dispatchers would be confusing. Also, dispatchers are often located in a separate area from first responders and have a different supervisory chain.*”<sup>6</sup>

The SOC does not denote the importance of any specific occupation, only categorizing like occupations based on job tasks and functions. While numerous comments and emotional appeals were made to change the categorization of 911 dispatchers to “33-0000 Protective Service Occupations,” the comments did not sway<sup>7</sup> the Standard Occupational Classification Policy Committee (SOCPC), a federal interagency technical working group. Ultimately, the SOCPC stated that making a change to a protective service occupation did not meet its classification principles or coding guidelines. The classification of occupations

---

<sup>3</sup> Standard Occupational Classification. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>. Last accessed 01/09/2020.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.apcointl.org/government-relations/topics/soc-revision/>

<sup>5</sup> “Classification principles.” Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines. 2018 SOC User Guide. Number 2. [https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc\\_2018\\_class\\_prin\\_cod\\_guide.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc_2018_class_prin_cod_guide.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> “OMB’s Interim Decision.” SOC Revision. APCO International. <https://www.apcointl.org/government-relations/topics/soc-revision/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc\\_responses\\_July\\_2016.htm](https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc_responses_July_2016.htm), specifically Docket Number 2-0867

is not influenced by the number of comments received or by the statement of opinion. It is a federal statistical survey, and classification is based upon a prescribed process of objective data collection. This decision was a blow to the industry, and a campaign to increase the visibility of PSTs and their roles and responsibilities was quickly underway. While a reconsideration was made, ultimately, the 911 telecommunicator remains classified as a position under the Office and Administrative Support Occupation.

A career categorization by BLS impacts not only classification but can also affect services employees are entitled to and pay. The BLS produces vital information about jobs and unemployment, wages, working conditions, and inflation indicators (Consumer Price Index and Producer Price Index).<sup>8</sup> The result of the OMB decision showed the 911 community that PST jobs are not adequately understood or defined. Thus, private citizens using BLS employment projection data will not be able to make an accurate career or educational decisions concerning this occupation, and businesses will be unable to use the occupational employment statistics data to determine fair wages, manage turnover rates, aid collective bargaining negotiations, or compare rates of injuries and illnesses to Survey of Occupational Injury and Illness (SOII) industry averages for mitigation efforts or applications for grants or contracts.

BLS data is used by state and local governments, advocacy groups, policymakers and researchers, and by the U.S. Federal Reserve, Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Department of Defense, and Department of Labor.<sup>9</sup> To misclassify an occupation may jeopardize the decision-making processes of organizations that depend on accurate BLS data.

## 2.3 Moving Forward

It is in the best interest of the 911 community to build the case for the reclassification of the PST by updating job descriptions to accurately depict the job duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the modern PST. A few states have already embarked on this such path, such as Maryland and Texas; however, while the 911 community understands the evolution of the telecommunicator position over the past decade, many current job descriptions do not adequately describe this changing environment, expectations, and requirements of today's PST. It is imperative that 911 directors, human resources and personnel departments, and decision-makers update job descriptions to reflect the responsibilities of the PST in today's technical and complex emergency communications environment. Without updates and revisions to detail what a telecommunicator truly does, recruitment, candidate selection, hiring practices, training, and retention may not align with expectations, compromising emergency communications effectiveness.

## 3 The Expanded Role of a 911 Telecommunicator

Since the inception of 911 over 50 years ago, the roles and responsibilities have changed and continue to do so as technology and public expectation increase. The tremendous growth in technology has forced the 911 industry to make great strides over the past several years to improve capabilities, including the communications centers in which PSTs operate. Historically, 911 centers were in police or fire

---

<sup>8</sup> "Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)." Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bls.asp>

<sup>9</sup> Groshen, E.L. Bus Econ (2018) 53: 86. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s11369-018-0073-5>

departments. Today, across the nation, communications centers are highly secure, often standalone facilities, operating in support of public safety allies, with their own management, training, and quality assurance (QA) divisions, and even technology divisions.

While once commonly known as public safety answering points (PSAPs), 911 organizations such as NENA and APCO now identify these centers as emergency communications centers or ECCs. This naming convention reflects the increased types of information ECCs and staff receive and process. ECCs across the country, if so equipped, now can receive requests for service via text message; some ECCs are preparing to receive streaming data and video to analyze situations first-hand versus “voice” requests for which 911 traditionally is known. There is a new ecosystem in emergency communications, and job descriptions need to be more detailed to acknowledge the shift from capturing information in a “form” to an integrated and engaged member of the response team. Telecommunicators have long been referred to as the first, first responder.

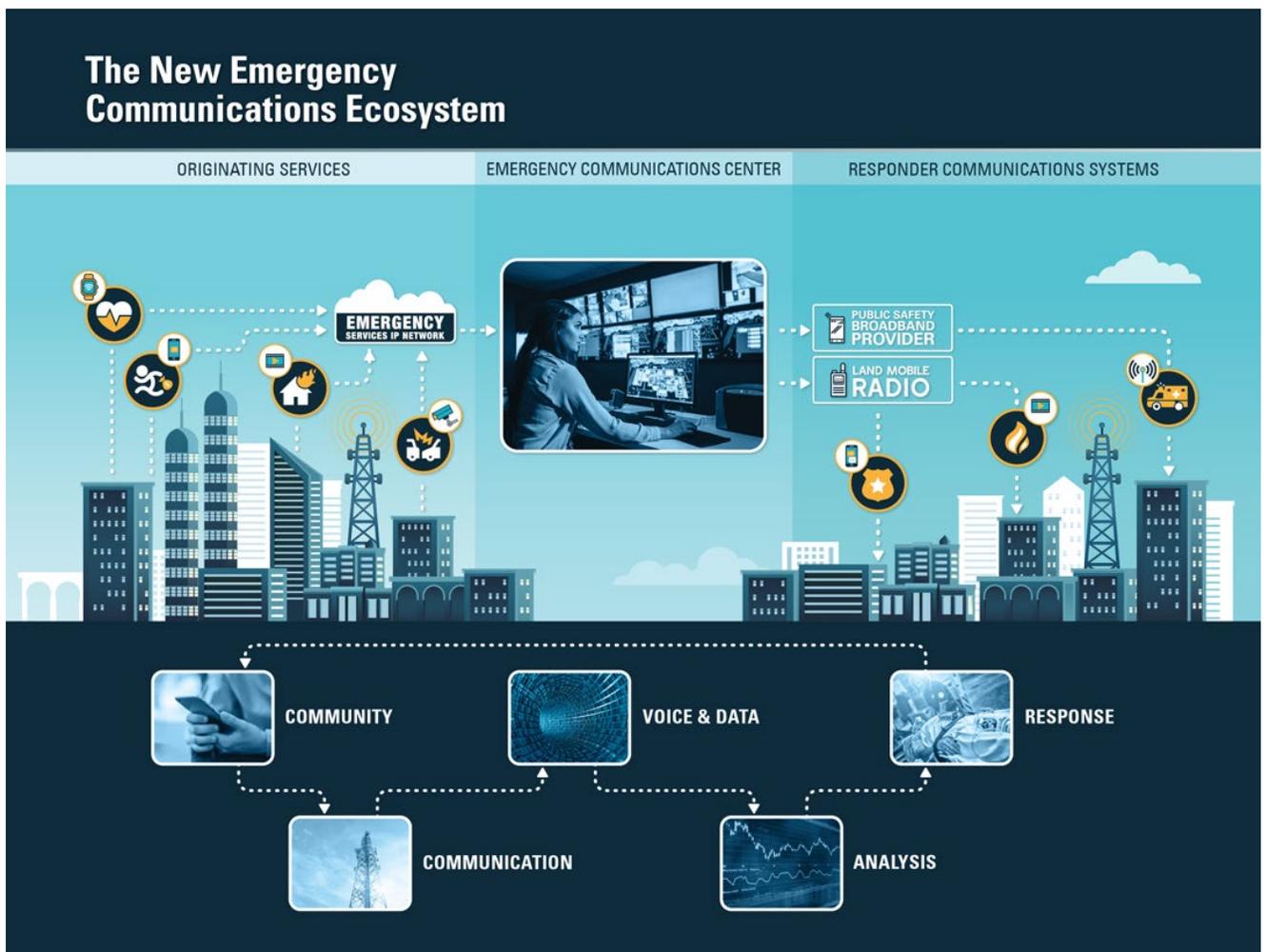


Figure 1: The New Emergency Communications Ecosystem

### 3.1 Development of the Position

Since the first 911 call in 1968, the duties of the PST have changed along with the changes to public safety technology and response requirements. At that time, 911 was just an abbreviated number to call, where calling for help meant using a wireline phone, inside a house or business or a public payphone. The receiving side was the same—a plain old telephone service (POTS) device—generally at a desk at the police station or an alarm desk at the firehouse. Secretaries, jailers, or someone close to the police desk would answer the telephone at the station, write brief notes on a card to keep a record of the call and pass the notes to police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians via one-way amplitude modulation (AM) radio broadcast or community fire horns that used codes to tell the general location of the fire. There was a limited capability to communicate with responders in the field directly, let alone provide any additional data or information with the voice transmission of the call, and each jurisdiction was an independent agency.

The requirements of the job slowly transitioned when 911 calls began to include a call back number and then more specific location information, and the communications system between the telecommunicator/dispatcher and the emergency responders also improved.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, industry leaders heavily discussed the 911 functionality expanding beyond the clerical function of an agency and becoming more a professional part of the response team and a critical conduit of information to the emergency field responder. The knowledge and abilities to operate the new complex technologies required new skills for staff and different means to recruit and test. One of the first technologies requiring more advanced skills was the computer-aided dispatch (CAD)<sup>10</sup> system. Lacking enough description of the importance and critical nature of the use of the technology, the major skills needed were identified as typing ability and data entry, which led to job descriptions that were similar to clerk typists.

According to Census Bureau data, in 1970, 13 percent of citizens had no access to a telephone.<sup>11</sup> Now, wireless subscriptions have increased by nearly 300 million since 2000.<sup>12</sup> The evolution of technology has revolutionized our society, including emergency communications. Prior to the introduction of tools such as CAD, calls for services were written on paper; tools and methods used by the PST changed the job from simple to complex, requiring multi-tasking and highly skilled technology usage. The job is now more like an air traffic controller as both PSTs and air traffic controllers require highly evolved skills and aptitude for the increased responsibility and a successful outcome of the incident and the safety of field responders. Just like air traffic controllers who are responsible for the people and field personnel in the airplanes they direct and control, PSTs must direct and control the safety of the people who call 911 and the responders the PST dispatches to an incident. Both occupations require the use of multiple data sources as well as highly evolved technology to remotely guide, monitor, and execute their mission of managing aircraft and people or managing public safety requestors and responders.

---

<sup>10</sup> CAD typically consists of a suite of software packages used to initiate public safety calls for service, dispatch, and maintain the status of responding resources in the field. It is generally used by emergency communications dispatchers, call-takers, and 911 operators in centralized, public-safety call centers, as well as by field personnel utilizing mobile data terminals (MDTs) or mobile data computers (MDCs).

<sup>11</sup> "Telephones." Historical Census of Housing Tables. Census of Housing. United States Census Bureau.

<https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/phone.html>

<sup>12</sup> CTIA. <https://www.ctia.org/the-wireless-industry/infographics-library/>

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook*<sup>13</sup> published by the BLS lists the following as similar occupations to the current work demanded of PSTs:

- Air Traffic Controller
- Customer Service Representatives
- EMTs and Paramedics
- Power Plant Operators, Distributors, and Dispatchers
- Security Guards and Gaming Surveillance Officers

### 3.2 Transitioning Expectations

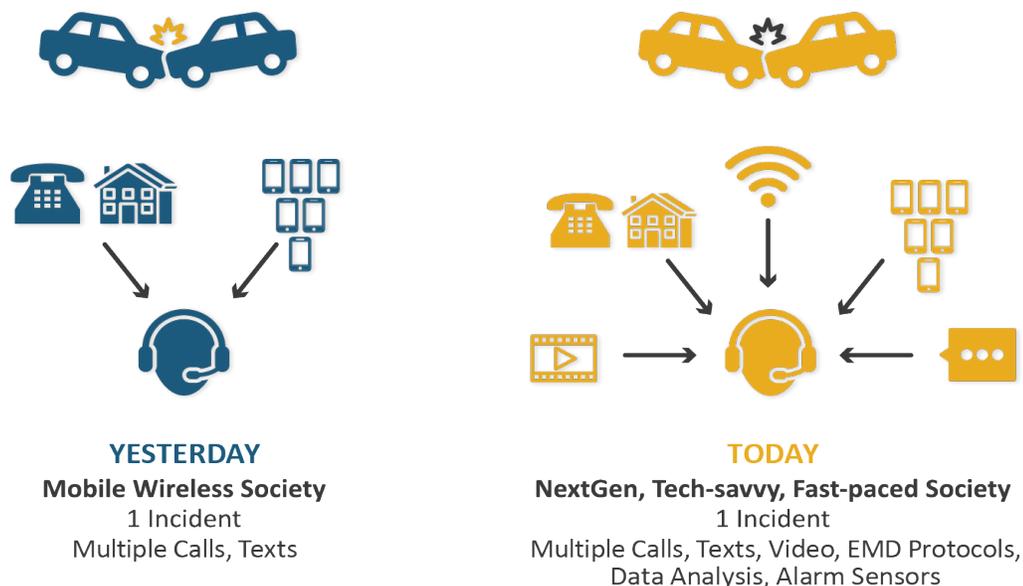


Figure 2: Expectations of the Public Safety Telecommunicator

While the expectations of the PST have changed, as seen in Figure 2, job descriptions do not reflect those changes accurately. Job descriptions, in some cases, were found to be older than people in the positions. The influx of information is not accounted for or reflected in the description of the position, which creates a two-pronged problem—it does not accurately describe the requirements of the position, and the wrong candidates are applying for the position because the expectations and needed knowledge, skills, and abilities often do not align.

The role of the PST is an intersection of critical intervention of lifesaving instructions for the caller and a conduit of essential communications for the field responder to improve outcomes. If a patient is not breathing and must wait two to three minutes, or longer, for an ambulance to arrive before initial treatment begins, for example, the outcome can be fatal. The initial intervention by a PST to triage and provide life-safety instructions over the phone is clearly necessary to preserve lives. Rendering direct care to callers has necessitated additional initial and continued training and certification for PSTs.

---

<sup>13</sup> Occupational Outlook Handbook. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/police-fire-and-ambulance-dispatchers.htm#tab-8>. Last accessed 01/09/2020.

## 4 Developing Job Descriptions

Over the last 50 years, 911 work has transformed from a clerical role to the lifesaving and increasingly complex tasks required of PSTs. These skills are critical to protecting the public and emergency field personnel. A PST's ability to direct callers to take action for their protection while rapidly gathering the right information to protect responders is a critical transformation. Unfortunately, 911 job descriptions have not kept pace with many of the job tasks that now are considered "routine."

The primary responsibility of a PST is to protect both citizens and field responders during the emergency incident. As of January 2020, forty-one sample job descriptions from 17 states were examined for this document; represented states can be seen in Figure 3. In addition, standards from APCO, NENA, and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) were researched to define the job duties and tasks of a PST.

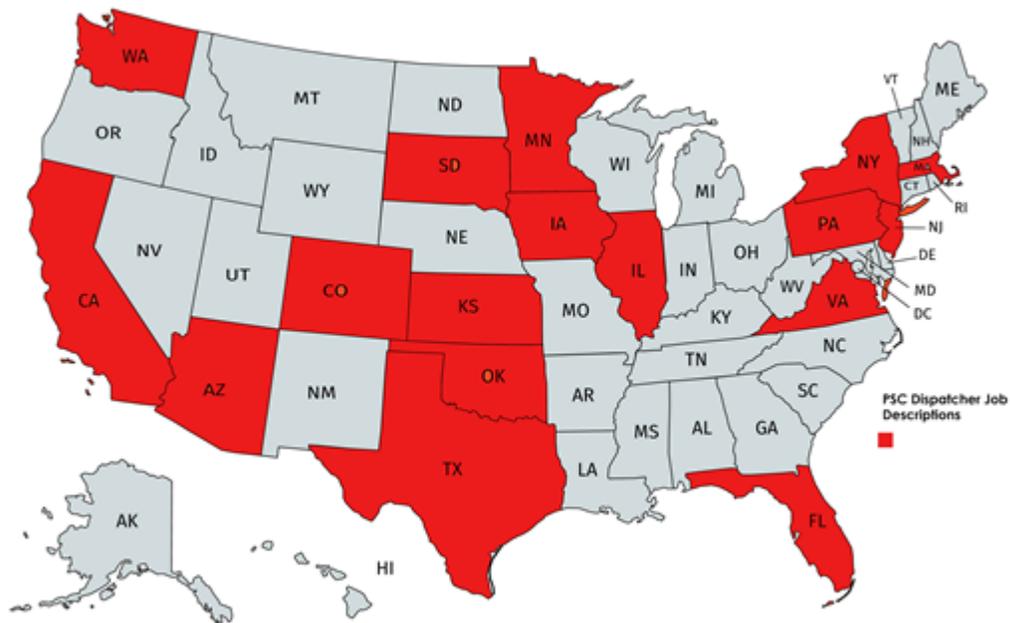


Figure 3: Job Descriptions Reviewed by State

### 4.1 PST Tasks

There are multiple tasks a PST should be able to complete individually or in tandem with other tasks after successful completion of training, which includes the ability to assess a situation, dispatch the correct responses and provide lifesaving instructions while help is in route to the emergency. A comprehensive list can be found below, and a complete guide can be found in Appendix A—PST Responsibilities and Key Job Skills and Tasks.

#### 4.1.1 Screen Initial Calls

Understanding the delivery mechanism of an incident is a vital step in screening an initial call. The origination of requests for service are no longer just traditional two-way communication voice calls via landline or wireless devices. Requests for service now originate from various sources such as text messages, visual data (video or images), social media, fire alarms, gunshot detection systems, and even automated data.

#### 4.1.2 Demonstrate Clear and Effective Communications

As soon as a request for service is made, a PST must control the conversation using their training in the communications cycle, ensuring information received is accurately reflected in the incident record.

#### 4.1.3 Ascertain Incident Information

PSTs must determine the location of the emergency as exactly as possible. This includes ascertaining the numerical address of the structure (if applicable), street name(s), intersections, landmarks, etc. and/or interpreting global positioning system (GPS) coordinates relayed from emergency assistance applications such as third-party alarm systems and other technology such as push-to-call, more commonly being found in schools, rideshare apps, and other applications on various operating systems.

Additionally, PSTs must define the type of incident to ensure the proper resources are deployed. PSTs often use vehicular accident information provided by bystanders and vehicle telematics to determine the need for advanced life support resources and/or specialized fire extraction equipment. Callers now can send images to an ECC (if capable of receiving), creating an enhanced view of what occurred or is occurring.

It is key changes in technology that have given rise to new job tasks, which necessitates modernistic skills in today's 911 environment. Data analytics becomes a key component of screening the initial call.

#### 4.1.4 Determine Scene and Responder Safety

The PST is a vital link between callers and response units. As a PST interrogates a caller, they may become aware of circumstances that could affect response unit safety, such as the location's historical information

#### 4.1.5 Identify and Mitigate Caller Safety

Taking steps to protect the caller is paramount to de-escalating an incident. This key job task is fundamental to preventing someone from suffering injury or harm.

#### 4.1.6 Document Information Accurately

Using a CAD system or other applicable records management system (RMS), a PST should ensure that incident information is recorded accurately.

#### 4.1.7 Manage Callers

Callers seeking assistance vary. Some may prove more challenging than others. Callers can be:

- Highly emotional, angry, frightened, hysterical
- Children
- Elderly
- Non-English-speaking
- Suicidal
- Chronic callers
- Demanding “social status” callers
- Intoxicated
- Hearing- or speech-impaired
- Disoriented
- Special needs

A PST must undergo appropriate training to develop the necessary skills to be able to react and meet the expectations of any caller.

#### 4.1.8 Take Appropriate Action

Once the call has been initially screened, categorized, prioritized, and all relevant information gathered, the PST should initiate complete the initial incident, forwarding it to the appropriate resource for dispatch of public safety personnel, if required.

#### 4.1.9 Provide Pre-arrival Instructions

Providing direct care via the use of pre-arrival instructions allows the PST to apply lifesaving and hands-on interventions when necessary. As of 1998, emergency medical dispatch (EMD) use of pre-arrival instructions has been the standard recommendation for the National Association of Emergency Medical Services Physicians (NAEMSP).<sup>14</sup> On October 18, 2017, the American Heart Association sent a letter of support to OMB pointing out how PSTs are a critical link in the cardiac arrest chain of survival. This alone is a differentiator as it can mean the difference of survival when CPR instructions need to be given to a caller.

While pre-arrival instructions are more often thought of as for medical guidance only, PSTs routinely provide pre-arrival instructions for law enforcement and fire incidents.

#### 4.1.10 Participate in field operations

The PST can be responsible for assisting with field communications, such as major events or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) callouts. Most ECCs have trained tactical dispatchers who help to pre-plan tactical communications responses for both pre-planned events and spontaneous major events.

---

<sup>14</sup> Wise, Stephanie L. and Edemekong, Peter F. “EMS, Pre-Arrival Instructions.” NCBI. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470543/>

#### 4.1.11 Process Request for Service for Law Enforcement, Fire, and Medical Personnel

Once the PST has completed caller interrogation, the duty of the PST shifts to processing the request for service and associated responsibilities. The job tasks below have been identified as critical elements of the dispatch process of a PST.

##### 4.1.11.1 Record Data Regarding the Incident

A PST needs to manage the call for service by ensuring additional data is captured in real time using the CAD system.

##### 4.1.11.2 Initiate Incident Response

Upon analyzing the call for service, a PST assigns the appropriate units to the incident to mitigate the request for service.

##### 4.1.11.3 Coordinate During Events

A PST is the coordinator of events, in most cases, ensuring proper resources are aware of and are appropriately responding to incidents.

##### 4.1.11.4 Control Radio Traffic

A PST must remain aware and always be prepared for unexpected radio transmissions from any unit at any time. For example, an officer may be on a traffic stop when suddenly they are ambushed. Or a firefighter may become trapped in a burning building and issue a MAYDAY call. Emergency medical service (EMS) providers may find themselves in a hostile situation that requires them to seek police assistance—which happens through the use of a radio transmission to telecommunicators. Whatever the circumstance, a PST must project an image of professionalism and remain calm and in control. A PST must be vigilant, perceptive, aware of changing dynamics, nimble, and possess the ability to rapidly adjust to changing scenarios. Being able to control radio traffic often means learning the field-specific languages often used in police, fire and EMS scenarios.

##### 4.1.11.5 Participate in Post-incident Activities

Depending on the severity of an incident, a PST may need to participate in post-dispatch activities.

#### 4.1.12 Operate Agency Equipment

A PST must be able to operate agency equipment. Many PSTs are responsible for operating multiple computer programs in order to perform their job tasks. This includes looking at and keeping track of activities on multiple screens. While there is no average, many centers have between five and eight monitors.

## 4.2 Enhance Professional Competence

In order to perform the job tasks in a rapidly evolving technological environment, a PST must actively seek to enhance their professional competence. Attending training classes, workshops, and conferences and obtaining certifications are paramount for a PST to succeed in the public safety environment.

## 5 Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) of a PST are vast. To acquire the knowledge and skills needed to function in the position of a PST requires a significant amount of training. Below is a comprehensive list of traits that are sought after in an ideal candidate.

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Geography</li><li>• Phone/Computer basics</li><li>• Stress management</li><li>• Chain of command</li><li>• Liability</li><li>• Terminology</li><li>• Roles and responsibilities</li><li>• Agency</li><li>• Performance standards</li><li>• Laws, statutes, and codes</li><li>• Incident management</li><li>• Governmental standards</li><li>• Technology</li><li>• Risk assessment</li><li>• Social media</li><li>• Automated data</li><li>• Video messaging</li><li>• Incident command</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keyboarding/Typing</li><li>• Multitasking</li><li>• Decision-making</li><li>• Critical thinking</li><li>• Verbal and written communications skills</li><li>• Ability to work on a team</li><li>• Active listening/hearing</li><li>• Customer service</li><li>• Computer</li><li>• Telephony</li><li>• Call control</li><li>• Conflict resolution</li><li>• Problem solving</li><li>• Analytical</li><li>• Troubleshooting</li><li>• Text messaging</li><li>• Data analytics</li><li>• Social media</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quick decision-making</li><li>• Empathy</li><li>• Respect</li><li>• Patience</li><li>• Maturity</li><li>• Even-tempered</li><li>• Integrity</li><li>• Ethical</li><li>• Life-long learner</li><li>• Dependable</li><li>• Flexible</li><li>• Efficient</li><li>• Tolerant</li><li>• Analytical</li><li>• Detail orientated</li></ul>

Figure 4: KSAs

### 5.1 Certifications

While there are various certifications and licensure requirements across the nation, the most common in the industry include the following:

- Basic Telecommunicator
- Emergency Medical Dispatch
- Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD)
- Emergency Police Dispatch (EPD)
- CPR for Healthcare Providers

- National Incident Management System (NIMS) 100, 200, 700, and 800; advanced courses are 300 and 400
- Emergency Number Professional (ENP)
- Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL)

## 6 Next Steps

It is well recognized throughout the 911 community that the current position descriptions for the PST are often not reflective of the present-day requirements and the expected skills of the role telecommunicators play in the chain of public safety response. Their critical impact on improving patient, responder, and victim safety outcomes is frequently recognized in practice but not effectively documented in job descriptions. This needs to change if the 911 community wants to establish the appropriate recognition for the position and attract individuals with the needed skills to do the job that it is today. This document has attempted to make a case for acting now to update and evolve the telecommunicator job description to be reflective of the necessary abilities required of the telecommunicators' roles and responsibilities.

911 authorities should review their current job descriptions for the telecommunicator positions in their operation and use the documents provided in Appendix B—Guidance on Creating a Job Description and Appendix C—Model Job Description. The model is reflective of current expectations and requirements and is forward-looking to NG911 requirements as well. It is provided to make the job of position description revision easier and to urge action to begin this process within respective organizations.

Consideration should also be given to sharing this document with human resources personnel to assist with the job description update process. The background and arguments advanced in this effort are provided to explain and inform on how the position has changed over the years, that the previous job descriptions are no longer valid for the job that is expected, and that NG911 will continue to evolve the PST position even more.

## Appendix A – PST Responsibilities and Key Job Skills and Tasks

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
<p>Screen and assess initial calls for service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying call delivery method (phone, text, video, picture, automated data)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Callers may use traditional methods such as:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dialing 911</li> <li>▪ Using a 10-digit phone line</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Callers may also use multiple technological platforms to contact the ECC, such as:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Text-to-911</li> <li>▪ Video-to-911</li> <li>▪ Video relay services</li> <li>▪ Social media</li> </ul> </li> <li>– While other calls may be delivered without human intervention, such as:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Automated alarms</li> <li>▪ Telematics</li> <li>▪ Artificial Intelligence (gunshot detection)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Prioritizing call answering</li> <li>• Greeting caller</li> <li>• Projecting a professional demeanor</li> <li>• Providing calming instructions to obtain information</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate clear and effective communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively listening</li> <li>• Conveying respect and empathy</li> <li>• Enunciating clearly while avoiding jargon with the caller</li> <li>• Controlling the call</li> <li>• Using appropriate terminology, codes, signals with field responders</li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
Ascertain incident information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtaining and verifying the incident location</li> <li>• Interpreting geographic information system (GIS) coordinate information and knowledge of mapping systems</li> <li>• Obtaining and verifying contact information</li> <li>• Rapidly determining the nature of the incident</li> <li>• Establishing when the incident happened</li> <li>• Identifying who is involved in the incident</li> <li>• Analyzing information that could include automated data feeds such as cameras, sensors, telematics</li> <li>• Using social media to investigate incident details (i.e., suicide message, images of suspects)</li> </ul>
Determine scene and responder safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrogating the caller to learn the circumstances of the emergency</li> <li>• Using multiple resources to determine situational awareness of a scene (i.e., hazardous materials or high occupancy locations, or history of previous incidents)</li> <li>• Using tools and data such as video from mobile devices, body cameras, traffic cameras, drones, and real-time location tracking to improve situational awareness and assist incident commanders on scene</li> <li>• Determining additional risks such as weapons present, medical conditions, or mobility issues of victims that complicate or threaten the health and safety of the responders and victims at the scene</li> </ul>
Identify and mitigate caller safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking that the reporting party not get involved in the situation, keep a safe distance, and remove themselves from the incident if it is an unsafe situation</li> <li>• Staying in contact with the caller to ensure their safety until responders are on scene</li> <li>• Interpreting audio cues, such as emotion and background noise</li> <li>• Recognizing indicators of psychological distress</li> </ul>
Document information accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documenting incident details quickly and accurately</li> <li>• Establishing incident priority based on written directives</li> </ul>
Caller management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using call control techniques and tactics to elicit information quickly and accurately from challenged callers</li> <li>• Using calming techniques such as persistent repetition; the use of “I” statements to break through the hysterical threshold</li> <li>• Deploying language services to assist foreign-speaking callers</li> <li>• Providing counsel to suicidal persons, domestic violence victims or serving as the primary contact with a hostage-taker</li> <li>• Utilizing mental health resources</li> </ul>
Take appropriate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ascertaining if public safety resource dispatch is required and relaying information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– If yes, coordinating the dispatch of the appropriate emergency services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– If no, providing the caller with the appropriate information</li> <li>• Reviewing request for service details</li> <li>• Informing caller of actions and advising of appropriate updates</li> <li>• Determining the need for outside agency resources such as traffic management, roadway clearance, towing services, power and utility services, hostage negotiators, social services, etc.</li> <li>• Using internal and external agency control devices (weather notification systems, air warnings, emergency management warning system activation, etc.)</li> <li>• Using social media to inform public</li> </ul>
Provide pre-arrival life-safety instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing pre-arrival instructions for law enforcement events, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Suicidal persons</li> <li>– Active shooter events</li> <li>– Deescalating persons in crisis (post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], mental illness)</li> <li>– Separating domestic violence victim from the abuser</li> <li>– Protecting children at the scene</li> <li>– Serving as a hostage negotiator</li> <li>– Preliminary clearance of roadway obstructions to prevent further injury or secondary accidents</li> <li>– Advice to crash victims to prevent further injury</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Providing pre-arrival instructions for fire events, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Escaping a structure fire</li> <li>– Protection for persons trapped in a fire</li> <li>– Wildland fire evacuation</li> <li>– Avalanche disasters</li> <li>– Accelerator stuck</li> <li>– Sinking vehicle</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Providing lifesaving instructions for medical events, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bleeding control</li> <li>– Choking/airway clearance</li> <li>– CPR</li> <li>– Respiratory arrest</li> <li>– Cardiac arrest</li> <li>– Drowning</li> <li>– Childbirth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
Process requests for service for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making notifications</li> <li>• Using federal and state databases to inquire about driver license statuses, registrations, and wanted checks, etc.</li> </ul>
Record data regarding the incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a CAD incident</li> <li>• Documenting important and necessary call details for response awareness and responder protection</li> <li>• Updating the CAD incident</li> <li>• Additional data collection from the same or other callers reporting the incident</li> </ul>
Initiate incident response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigning units to the incident</li> <li>• Relaying pertinent incident information</li> <li>• Obtaining unit acknowledgment</li> <li>• Coordinating available resources</li> <li>• Relaying updates to units</li> <li>• Broadcasting be on the lookouts (BOLOs) or attempt to locate (ATL) messages</li> <li>• Disseminating information to other resources</li> <li>• Anticipating potential escalation</li> <li>• Performing status checks</li> </ul>
Coordinate during events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifying supervisors</li> <li>• Notifying appropriate resources</li> <li>• Corresponding with other agencies</li> <li>• Activating mutual aid, when applicable</li> <li>• Disseminating interdepartmental intelligence</li> <li>• Providing shift briefings</li> </ul>
Control radio traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring radio channel(s)</li> <li>• Active listening and awareness techniques</li> <li>• Acknowledging radio traffic</li> <li>• Complying with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations</li> </ul>
Participate in post-incident activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing testimony</li> <li>• Testifying in court proceedings</li> <li>• Participating in call critique and QA review sessions</li> <li>• Providing or requesting peer support and debriefings</li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in critical incident stress management (CISM) debriefings</li> <li>• Participating in after-action report meetings</li> </ul>
Operate agency technology and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating telephony system effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Answering incoming calls</li> <li>– Placing outgoing calls</li> <li>– Performing conference calls</li> <li>– Placing calls on hold if appropriate</li> <li>– Performing appropriate transfers</li> <li>– Utilizing text-to-911 programs</li> <li>– Rapidly identifying and recognizing service interruptions such as equipment failures, cybersecurity breaches, swatting, slamming or spamming incidents, or denial of service (DOS) attacks</li> <li>– Operating teletypewriter (TTY)/telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD)</li> <li>– Responding to multimedia sessions/short message sessions (MMS/SMS)</li> <li>– Responding to video-relayed information</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Operating technology systems such as CAD, call-handling equipment (CHE), logging recorder systems, traffic cameras, traffic lights, perimeter cameras, radio technology, alarms, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accessing incident data</li> <li>– Updating incident data</li> <li>– Assigning appropriate units</li> <li>– Interpreting other sensor data such as automatic emergency notification from law enforcement vehicles or body sensors, biometric alarms, and notifications</li> <li>– Interpreting smart building data and sensors, including video feeds, hazmat</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Utilizing map/GIS programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifying the location of the incident</li> <li>– Interpreting automatic number identification/automatic location identification (ANI/ALI) to locate emergencies</li> <li>– Plotting GPS coordinates</li> <li>– Providing directions</li> <li>– Using automatic vehicle location (AVL) data to track units</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Operating radio systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dispatching calls</li> <li>– Relaying information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Providing updated information</li> <li>– Maintaining current status of units</li> <li>• Operating RMS               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accessing records</li> <li>– Updating records</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maintaining equipment functionality               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Testing equipment</li> <li>– Troubleshooting equipment</li> <li>– Reporting problems</li> <li>– Applying contingency plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Operating computer systems               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Successful passing of required background checks and clearances to operate sensitive databases.</li> <li>– Accessing database information (National Crime Information Center [NCIC], local/state crime network, Integrated Public Alert and Warning System [IPAWS])</li> <li>– Operating mass notification software</li> <li>– Using social media platforms</li> <li>– Conducting inquiries</li> <li>– Updating/Modifying/Maintaining systems</li> <li>– Following regulations</li> <li>– Maintaining systems</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Enhance professional competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seek additional training</li> <li>• Completing training and certifications required for assigned PST position</li> <li>• Completing continuing education and career development</li> <li>• Following established ECC policies and procedures</li> <li>• Adhering to federal disclosure and privacy laws</li> <li>• Using debriefing tools, stress management techniques, and critical incident response models</li> </ul>

## Appendix B – Guidance on Creating a Job Description

### What is a job description?

A job description is a document that is intended to communicate to potential applicants the main duties and responsibilities of a job. It can be used in various manners such as:

- To define the job duties and tasks
- A mechanism for recruitment
- For employee training and development
- To establish performance standards
- Organizational development
- Establishing legal defensibility
- As a tool to benchmark to other emergency communications centers (ECCs) in a salary survey or classification efforts

---

It's for these reasons that it is paramount to keep job descriptions up-to-date and current.

---

### How to use this guidance document

While this guidance document is relevant to the entire 911 community, its use is specifically geared towards those responsible for creating and updating job descriptions.

Each job description topic area contains two major components (see figure below). For each topic area, sample language has been provided, as well as further “advice and tips” to take into consideration. ECCs are encouraged to work with their hiring authorities as they develop, update, or implement job descriptions.

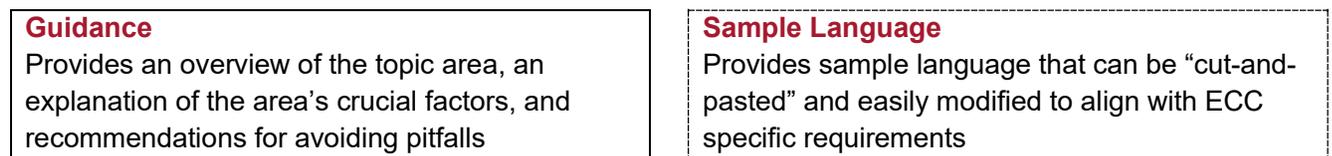


Figure 5: Components

## Before you get started ... a checklist

### ✓ Understand your job requirements

ECCs should review their job duties and tasks and create a specific list of what a public safety telecommunicator (PST) does. Identifying key components of the job responsibilities will help ensure job descriptions are in alignment with current ECC operations. Ensure you're also capturing the "soft" requirements such as decision-making and critical thinking skills.

### ✓ Engage your hiring authority

Make sure you know any rules set forth for hiring. Get to know and understand any specific requirements as well as the process to keep job descriptions updated. Learn which platforms your hiring authority uses to recruit job applicants.

### ✓ Seek advice from other ECCs

Review your neighbors' job descriptions. Find out how you can set yourself apart from others and be more appealing. Determine if you can conduct a pay scale and benefit comparison.

## Job Description Guidance, Sample Language, and Examples

### Job Title

#### **Guidance**

Assure your job title is as specific as possible.  
The job title should accurately reflect the position.

#### *Tips and Advice*

Stay away from slang or jargon.

#### **Sample Language**

*Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST)*

## Job Summary

### **Guidance**

A job summary should be concise and include an overview of the responsibilities. It should be engaging to the reader and catch their attention.

### ***Tips and Advice***

Chose a writing style that matches your ECC. Wording that is too casual or too technical could provide the wrong perception of the culture of your ECC.

### **Sample Language**

*This critical role serves as the vital communications link between the public needing help and emergency services response. This entails a candidate to be able to work independently in a high-stress environment while receiving and evaluating incoming emergency and administrative requests for emergency services, including but not limited to law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS); triaging those requests for service; providing guidance and assistance to the public in life-safety situations; and coordinating appropriate responses to high-risk, high-stress operations, with the objective of keeping all participants safe.*

# Job Responsibilities

## **Guidance**

Be transparent about the responsibilities. List the essential tasks using bullet points to make it easier for the reader to understand. Try to “paint a picture” of what a typical day in the ECC is like.

## *Tips and Advice*

Start each sentence with a verb in the present tense.

Stay away from nonspecific descriptions, such as “once in a while.”

## **Sample Language**

### **Call Taker**

- *Using training and policies to screen requests for emergency services; answering them professionally, recognizing if a call is received from telephone, text, video, or an automated data feed.*
- *Providing pre-arrival and post-dispatch instructions to those requiring assistance during high-stress situations, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), childbirth, hemorrhaging, active shooter and entrapments.*
- *Ascertaining incident information by obtaining and verifying caller information and location, determining the nature of the incident, and all available data including but not limited to automated data, social media information, text message, images or video and providing information to emergency services either verbally and/or digitally.*

### **Dispatcher (Law, Fire, and/or EMS)**

- *Using training and operational protocols to take appropriate action such as: relaying critical information, dispatching/initiating emergency response services.*
- *Conducting health and safety status checks of responders and using other available technology to ensure on-scene responders' safety.*
- *Documenting thoroughly and accurately all incident activities while maintaining awareness of scene activities.*

## Minimum Requirements

### Guidance

Specify the mandatory qualifications needed for the position. Explain if any licenses, certificates are required.

### Sample Language

- *A high school diploma or GED*
- *Must have never committed, been involved in, or been convicted of, a felony or serious misdemeanor*
- *Must be able to work on a rotating schedule including nights, weekends, and holidays to ensure 24/7 coverage*
- *Subject to call back and hold over to maintain minimum staffing 24/7*
- *Certification in CPR*

## Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

### Guidance

Be clear about the knowledge and skills that you seek in a candidate. Additionally, describe the traits or attributes you would expect a candidate to display in that role.

### *Tips and Advice*

Remember, knowledge and skills can be learned, whereas a trait is an innate ability. Take care with traits as they can be subjective in nature.

### Sample Language

#### **Knowledge**

- *Working knowledge of Windows-based software and various other computerized electronic, telecommunications equipment*

#### **Skills**

- *Communicate clearly, concisely, and effectively; relay details accurately; listen actively; think and act quickly*
- *Compile and analyze operational data and prepare and maintain accurate records*
- *Effectively interact with people of different social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds*

#### **Abilities**

- *Dependable, self-motivated and team-oriented*
- *Relentless problem solver*
- *Friendly and tactful personality*
- *Patient and resilient*
- *Stress tolerance and adaptability*

## Your ECC

### **Guidance**

Take time to describe your work environment. Assume the candidate knows nothing about emergency communications. Be specific. Explain if this is a full-time or part-time position. Include information on the location, the nature of shift work, and any essential elements related to employment.

### *Tips and Advice*

Including an address will help with your candidate pool and not target people who do not want to relocate.

Being clear about shift work can help discourage those unable to meet the demands of the schedule.

Include any links to videos or social media where a person can learn more about the agency.

### **Sample Language**

#### **Work Environment**

- *Work is performed in an emergency communications center. The work level can fluctuate from minimal to fast-paced and high volume. The employee deals with crisis situations that require them to quickly make major decisions involving people, resources, and property with frequently limited direction.*
- *The PST may be asked to work scheduled shifts at any time of the day and on holidays.*
- *Must be able to cope in a safe manner with stressful situations, emotional callers, irate responders and unprofessional contacts.*
- *Under unusual circumstances, the PST may be required to perform duties at or near the scene of any emergency.*

#### **Physical Requirements**

- *This work is sedentary and requires little to no exertion of force.*

## Salary and Benefits

### **Guidance**

Provide information on salaries and benefits. This should include paid vacation days, medical insurance, retirement plans, etc.

### *Tips and Advice*

Include a salary range if you do not have a specific amount.

### **Sample Language**

#### **Salary**

- *\$47,987 – \$98,521 a year*
- *Applicants with less experience (2-3 years) may be considered at a lower classification with a salary range of \$40,622 – \$58,012*

#### **Benefits**

- *Holiday pay*
- *\$2 an hour night shift differential*

## Appendix C – Model Job Description

---

*The following model is intended only as an illustration of the various types of work performed. The omission of specific duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position. Emergency communication centers (ECCs) are encouraged to “cut and paste” language from this document while working closely with their hiring authority.*

---

### JOB TITLE: Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST)

#### SUMMARY

This critical role serves as the vital communications link between the public needing help and emergency services response. As members of the public safety ecosystem, PSTs are typically the first point of contact when a person reaches out for help. This entails a candidate to be able to work independently in a high-stress environment while receiving and evaluating incoming emergency and administrative requests for emergency services, including but not limited to law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS); triaging those requests for service; providing guidance and assistance to the public in life-safety situations; and coordinating appropriate responses to high-risk, high-stress operations, with the objective of keeping all participants safe.

#### ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES AND TASKS<sup>15</sup>

The primary responsibility of the PST is to protect citizens and emergency responders during the emergency incident. These include:

- Using training and policies to screen requests for emergency services; answering them professionally, recognizing if a call is received from telephone, text, video, or an automated data feed.
- Using appropriate technology to communicate with callers.
- Interpreting sensor data to triage, prioritize, properly categorize, and initiate the correct emergency response.
- Using knowledge of law enforcement, fire, and EMS protocols to prioritize and sequence calls promptly in limited time with limited or no supervision.
- Demonstrating clear and effective communications with active listening, call control, judgment, respect, and empathy with callers that range from calm to panicked.

---

<sup>15</sup> The job duties and tasks are an all-inclusive list based on current capabilities of ECCs.

- Providing pre-arrival and post-dispatch instructions to those that are requiring assistance during high-stress situations, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), childbirth, hemorrhaging, active shooter, and entrapments.
- Managing challenging callers using appropriate handling of distressed, autistic, hearing-impaired, elderly, angry, and foreign-language-speaking callers.
- Providing direct counseling to suicidal persons, domestic violence victims, and children.
- Ascertaining incident information by obtaining and verifying caller information and location, determining the nature of the incident, and all available data including but not limited to automated data, social media information, text message, images or video, and providing information to emergency services either verbally and/or digitally.
- Ability to prioritize multiple events based on available resources—critical thinking.
- Using TDD and relay services to comply with standards for handling calls from hearing-impaired callers.
- Utilizing language interpretation services and coordinating with mental health resources for appropriate contacts with callers who have mental health or language barriers to receiving help.
- Using text-to-911 to communicate effectively with callers.
- Interpreting caller location by using geographic knowledge, tools, and location tracking capabilities when available.
- Interpreting automatic number and automatic location data provided by the emergency communications phone system and verifying data using mapping software for accuracy and reliability.
- Maintaining communications during life-threatening emergencies, providing safety/lifesaving instructions, and maintaining control of the conversation until field units arrive on scene.
- Using available vehicular, bystander, and/or law enforcement information for the purpose of protecting the public at the scene as well as on-scene responders by identifying the need for advanced life support resources or specialized fire extraction equipment.
- Utilizing training and reference resources when determining the nature and priority of emergency incidents that have live-streaming videos, graphic images, and text.
- Using training and operational protocols to take appropriate action such as: relaying critical information, dispatching/initiating emergency response services, or referring callers to other agencies.
- Documenting incident details quickly and accurately to establish incident urgency, categorizing the incident type, and obtaining the proper help for the caller.
- Demonstrating clear and effective communications and active listening with public safety responders using appropriate terminology, codes, and signals.
- Relaying initial information for dispatch accurately, reviewing the call for service details, and assuming incident command until first responders arrive.
- Conducting health and safety status checks of responders and using other available technology to ensure on-scene responders' safety.
- Documenting thoroughly and accurately all incident activities while maintaining awareness of scene activities.
- Operating emergency, administrative, and backup telephone communications systems effectively.
- Facilitating the transferring of calls to the appropriate resources and performing conference calls with entities, such as but not limited to poison control centers or helicopter dispatch.

- Interpreting and understanding local and regional geography to quickly and accurately identify the location of the emergency to improve response times of field responders.
- Operating a sophisticated workstation comprised of multiple computer systems, computer-aided dispatch (CAD) software and geographical information systems (GIS), state and federal clearinghouses, call handling including teletypewriter (TTY) and text-to-911 sessions, as well as communications systems such as radio dispatch consoles and recording systems.
- Operating multiple systems and conversations simultaneously without mistake.
- Notifying key personnel of critical incidents, using judgment to determine the need to contact other law enforcement and public safety agencies for additional information and resources as needed, or relaying information regarding incidents and situational awareness.
- Using mass notification software, including social media platforms, to keep the public informed of emergency incidents.
- Activating mass community warning and notification software programs to inform the public of impending critical information related to such things as severe weather impacts, potential injury or life-safety events.
- Managing chain of custody for records and documentation used in court proceedings and legal discovery.
- Maintaining a calm demeanor under chaotic and stressful circumstances, multiple conversations, and frequently noisy environments.
- Completing training, certifications, and competencies as needed by actively seeking training, completing the training and certifications required for assigned PST positions, and completing continuing education and career development as necessary.
- Following established agency policies and procedures, being aware of liability to the agency, and adhering to federal disclosure and privacy laws.
- Using debriefing tools, stress management techniques, and critical incident response models to deal with mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- A high school diploma or GED
- Dependable, self-motivated and team-oriented, with a desire to provide a service to the community
- Working knowledge of Windows-based software and various other computerized electronic, telecommunications equipment
- Flexibility to adapt to changes
- Have great attention to detail and empathy towards the customers' needs and concerns
- Must be able to adapt and function, without reservation, in high-stress situations
- Must pass a background investigation that meets all local, state, and federal requirements as well as to be without felony convictions.
- Must be able to perform essential job functions (reasonable accommodation may be made on a case-by-case basis)
- Must have never committed, been involved in, or been convicted of a felony or serious misdemeanor
- Must be able to work on a rotating schedule, including nights, weekends, and holidays to ensure 24/7 coverage

- Subject to call back and hold over to maintain minimum staffing 24/7
- This position is designated as essential and must report to work during times when the government/agency is closed
- Must be able to obtain and maintain the following licenses and certifications within a given time frame:
  - Basic Telecommunicator Course that includes:
    - Telecommunicator roles and responsibilities
    - 911 call processing
    - Radio communications
    - Emergency management
    - Emergency communications technology
    - Legal concepts
    - Interpersonal communications
    - Stress management
    - Quality assurance
  - Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Training
  - Certification in CPR

## KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- By the end of the probationary period, thorough knowledge of the policies, procedures, processes, laws, ordinances, and regulations affecting public safety call-taking and the ability to apply them appropriately.
- Able to use logic, critical thinking, and reasoning to reach conclusions and solve problems.
- Adhere to policy and procedure requirements that are stringent, rigorous, and unwavering, including confidentiality of information and trustworthiness while dealing with sensitive information.
- Communicate clearly, concisely, and effectively; relay details accurately; listen actively; think and act quickly.
- Compile and analyze operational data and prepare and maintain accurate records.
- Effectively interact with people of different social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and professional working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, representatives from other departments, and other emergency services agencies.
- Follow instructions, spell correctly, and write clearly.
- Handle multiple tasks simultaneously, under pressure, and in emergency and stressful situations.
- Learn quickly and retain public safety and technology training material.
- Maintain regular, reliable, and punctual attendance.
- Obtain information from hostile, confusing, and emotional callers.
- Provide effective customer service and deal tactfully and courteously with a demanding public.
- Able to handle complaints and difficult situations, remaining calm under pressure.
- Remember names, numbers, and locations accurately.
- Read and interpret geographical spatial data and maps quickly and accurately.
- Resilient and resourceful while coordinating high-risk, high-stress operations, with the objective of keeping all participants safe.

- Operate computer systems with specialized software and enter data via keyboard and software with speed and accuracy.
- Organize and prioritize work to meet deadlines and accomplish tasks.
- Use judgment and decision-making skills to rapidly evaluate situations, establish priorities, resolve matters, and pass on information, as needed.
- Relentless problem solver.
- Friendly and tactful personality.
- Patient and resilient.
- Stress tolerance and adaptability.

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work is performed in an emergency communications center. The work level can fluctuate from minimal to fast-paced and high volume. The employee deals with crisis situations that require them to quickly make major decisions involving people, resources, and property with frequently limited direction.

The PST may be asked to work scheduled shifts at any time of the day and on weekends and holidays. Must be able to cope in a safe manner with stressful situations, emotional callers, irate responders and unprofessional contacts. Under unusual circumstances, the PST may be required to perform duties at or near the scene of any emergency.

## PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

This work is sedentary and requires little to no exertion of force. Work regularly requires speaking or hearing and frequently sitting, using hands to finger, handle, or feel, reaching with hands and arms and repetitive motions. Work requires close vision, distance vision, ability to adjust focus, depth perception, and peripheral vision. Vocal communication is required for expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word and conveying detailed or important instructions to others accurately, loudly or quickly. Hearing is required to perceive information at normal spoken word levels and to receive detailed information through oral communications, and/or make fine distinctions in sound. Work requires preparing and analyzing written or computer data. Work requires exposure to loud noises, extreme emotions, and stressful environments. Work is generally indoors and in a moderately noisy location surrounded by others talking on the phone or radio.

## COMPENSATION

The non-negotiable starting salary for this position is \$20.24 per hour.

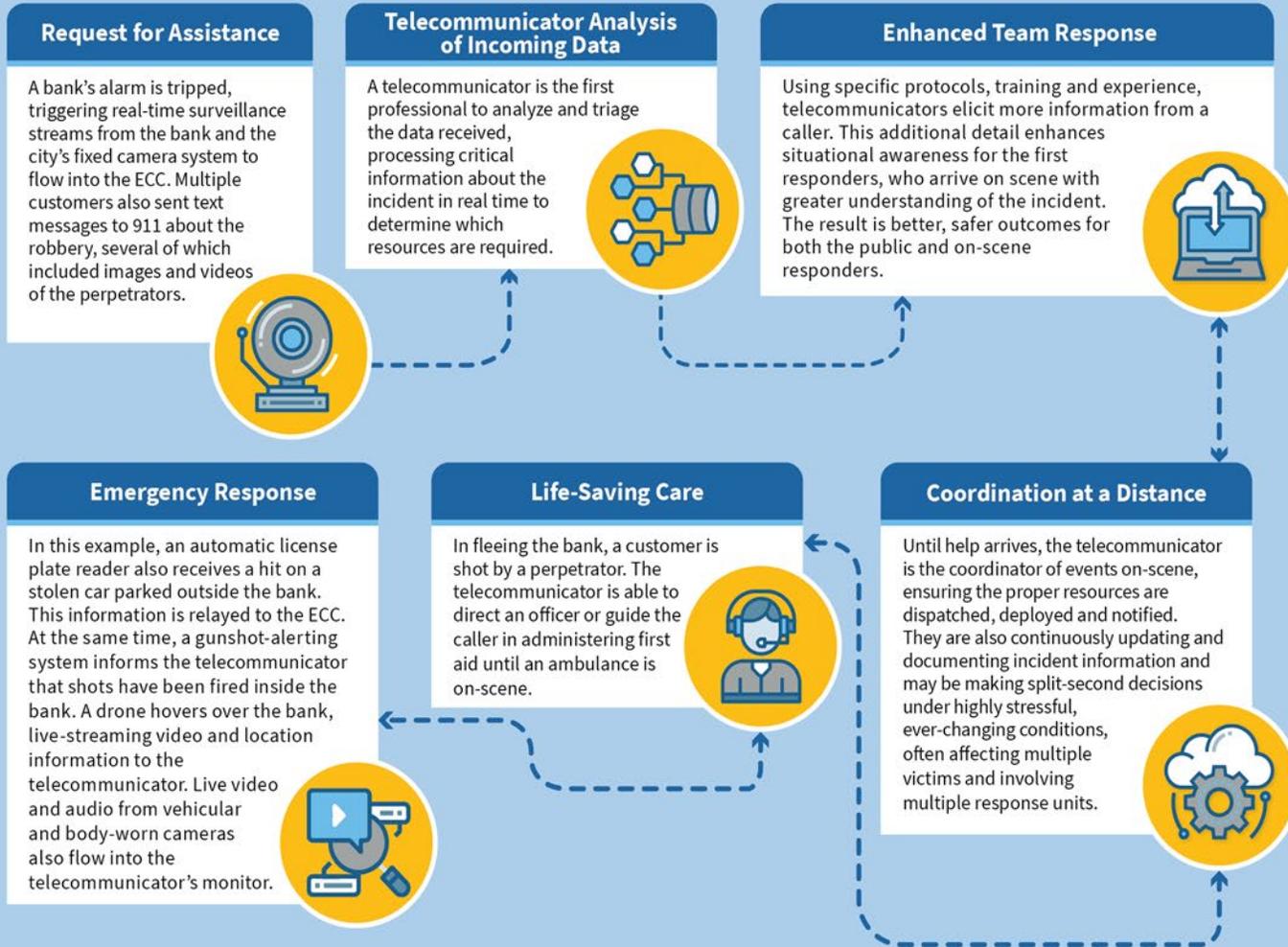
Benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, a vision plan, annual leave, sick leave, paid holidays, a contributory retirement plan, group term life insurance, flexible spending accounts (health savings/flexible spending account [HSA/FSA]), and long-term disability insurance.

## Appendix D – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographics

The following two graphics can be used to illustrate how a PST is involved in all aspects of the emergency response team.

# THE CRITICAL ROLE OF TODAY'S PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS

Here is just one of countless scenarios a telecommunicator may handle at their emergency communications center (ECC) when a request for assistance comes in—and how they ensure every call is handled quickly, calmly and appropriately with skill and expertise:



To learn more about the work telecommunicators do and the public safety telecommunicator reclassification effort, go to [911.gov](https://911.gov).



# CONTINUUM OF A CALL

Work performed by a 911 public safety telecommunicator

## First Responder & Support All Aspects of the Call for Service

- ▶ Answers call for help from public and first responders
- ▶ Provides calm and empathy
- ▶ Interrogates and assesses response needs
- ▶ Provides first aid and basic emergency response verbally to ensure continuation of life
- ▶ Determines available and appropriate public safety (PS) response
- ▶ Communicates with PS, initiates field units, tracks response
- ▶ Monitors radio communications adding details to the call record
- ▶ Initiates additional response units or determines need
- ▶ Interprets GIS data to advise responding units
- ▶ Keeps responders safe by informing and controlling, uses judgment and training to escalate response as appropriate

## Field Responders

### Law Enforcement

- ▶ Traffic control for protection of secondary crashes, arrest, call for back up or additional units

### Fire Response

- ▶ Suppression, first aid, link between on scene assistance and full EMS

### Emergency Medical Services

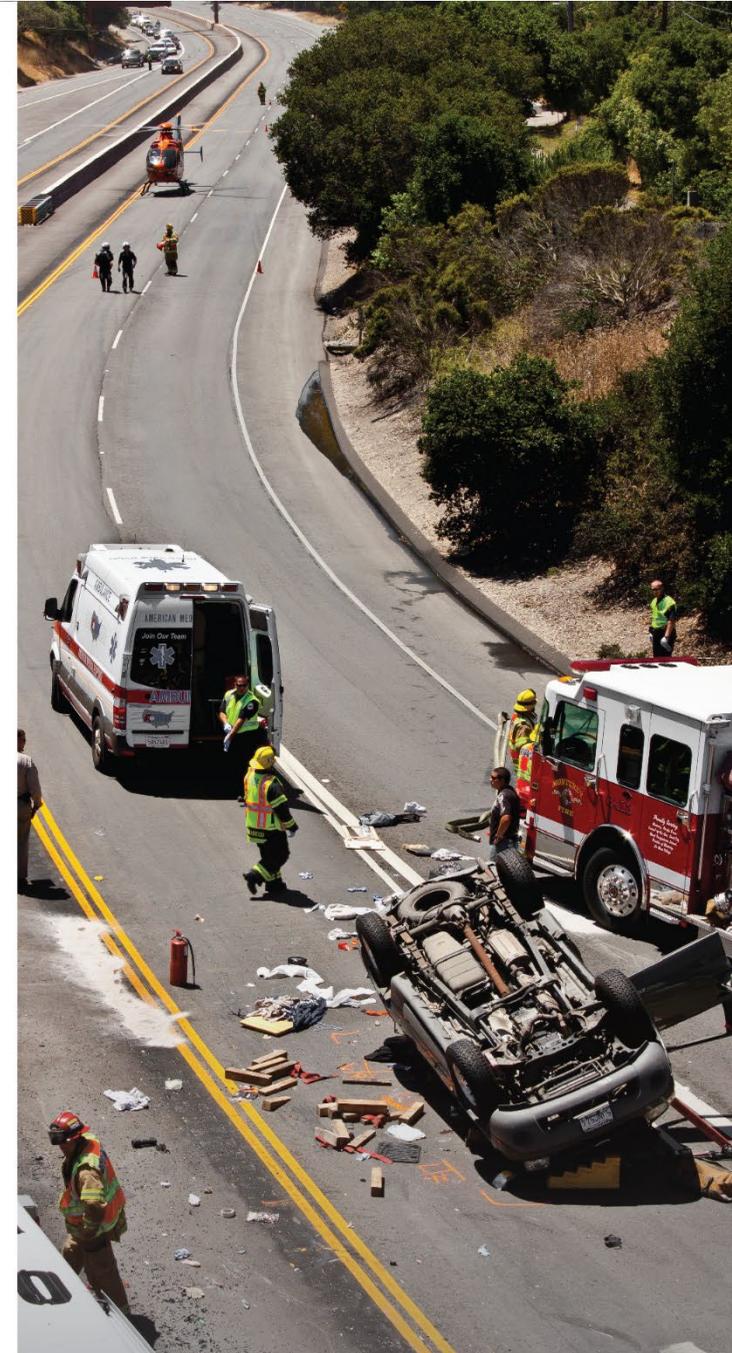
- ▶ Advanced first aid and life support; transport via ground or air

## Transport

- ▶ PST interprets GIS data
- ▶ Dispatches response vehicles such as ambulance or helicopter
- ▶ Monitors and relays impacting weather events or conditions to ensure safety of responders and victims

## Records & Legal

- ▶ Ensures call record accuracy
- ▶ Accurate time-stamp of 911 calls for future investigations
- ▶ Transfer to appropriate records systems
- ▶ Linking events





**Establishing or Expanding a  
Public Safety Telecommunicator Training Program  
May 2022**

## Acknowledgments

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA), National 911 Program, convened a working group of numerous 911 professionals with a deep commitment to the individuals that are the first, first responders in any emergency. The Program provides the space to meet and the resources to assist these professionals to create the toolkit. The goal of this toolkit is to provide public safety answering point (PSAP)/emergency communications center (ECC) leaders and decision-makers with a framework to help ensure job descriptions, training programs, and operational documents adequately reflect the evolving expectations of the public safety telecommunicator. This document, entitled "Guidelines for Establishing or Expanding a Public Safety Telecommunicator Training Program," provides a framework for evaluating, updating, and maintaining your center's training program to ensure it equips public safety telecommunicators with the knowledge and skills to perform their duties.

Thank you to the following industry experts who were integral in leading this effort and developing materials that will support future data-driven decisions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as a result of data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), state and local 911 agencies, and state and local policymakers. Without their contribution of time and expertise, this document would not be possible.

- Andrea Shepard, MBA, Montgomery County Emergency Communications District, Texas
- April Heinze, ENP, National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- Chad Chewing, Livingston County Central Dispatch / 911, Michigan
- Dan Henry, NENA
- Daniel R. Morden, MSA, PEM, Gratiot County Central Dispatch Authority, Michigan
- Halcyon Frank, ENP, The Dispatch Lab
- Harriet Rennie-Brown, ENP, National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA)
- Jerry Eisner, RedSky Technologies
- Kevin Haight, Motorola Solutions, previously with Idaho State Police
- Mark Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Melissa Alterio, M.S., CPE, RPL, Cobb County Emergency Communications Department, Georgia
- Nathan Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Rosa Ramos, ENP, CMPC, Alameda County Regional Emergency Communications Center, California
- Roxanne VanGundy, ENP, RPL, Lyons County 911, Kansas
- Tony Leese, South East Regional Emergency Services Agency (SERESA), Michigan
- Ty Wooten, ENP, International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED), previously with NENA

# Table of Contents

- 1 Call to Action ..... 1
- 2 Background ..... 2
  - 2.1 Moving Forward ..... 4
- 3 The Importance of a Formal Training Program..... 5
  - 3.1 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities .....6
  - 3.2 Best Practices .....7
  - 3.3 Standards .....8
  - 3.4 Certifications .....9
  - 3.5 Continuing Education .....11
- 4 Next Steps ..... 13
- Appendix A – PST Responsibilities and Key Job Skills and Tasks ..... 13
- Appendix B – Model Training Program ..... 19
- Appendix C – Certification and Training Resources..... 22
- Appendix D – Guidance on Creating a Formal Training Program ..... 25
- Appendix E – Model Lesson Plan ..... 33
- Appendix F – Minimum Training Standards ..... 34
- Appendix G – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographics..... 36

# HISTORY

## Federal Classification

The United States (U.S.) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under the Department of Labor, is responsible for the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data. “Occupations are classified based on work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education and/or training needed to perform the work.” [Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines, 2018 SOC (bls.gov)]

## The Decisions to Not Reclassify

BLS ultimately was unable to reclassify because of the lack of objective, measurable data; thus, the 911 telecommunicator position remains classified under the Office and Administrative Support Occupation. The decision not to reclassify PSTs from the Office and Administrative Support Occupation to Protective Services was a blow to the industry and a campaign to increase the visibility of PSTs and their roles and responsibilities was undertaken.

## Moving Forward

It is in the best interest of the 911 community to assemble objective data and information that can be used for the reclassification of the PST by updating job descriptions, training programs, and written directives to accurately depict job duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the modern PST.

For more information on the Toolkit visit [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)

## 1 Call to Action

It is vital that when a person dials 911, they receive a consistent level of 911 service—no matter where they live or travel in the U.S.

Consequently, there must be agreed-upon common elements that ensure the person who answers a 911 call has met baseline core competencies, and that the public will receive a standard level of expertise and professionalism when communicating with a public safety answering point (PSAP), an emergency communications center (ECC), or other emergency services provider.

This toolkit has been developed to help ECCs take the necessary actions to support a change in job classification of public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) from clerical to **protective services**. The case for change includes updating job descriptions, ensuring or developing a comprehensive training program, and addressing technology and tool needs for PSTs. To properly describe the critical role the PST plays in the protection of life and property in the 911 call continuum and to support the change in job classification, ECCs are encouraged to read and act upon all four parts of this toolkit as necessary.

This document, *Guidelines for Establishing and Expanding a Public Safety Telecommunicator Training Program*, is part two of a four-part toolkit that addresses the steps an ECC can take to prepare for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reclassification consideration.



***This document is a call to action to evaluate, update, and maintain your center’s training program to ensure it equips PSTs with the knowledge and skills to perform the duties and tasks necessary for the job.***

This toolkit will help you evaluate your training program. It provides a background on the importance of a training program, the essential elements of a training program, and a framework to help assess, update, and/or develop a training program.

#### Understand your training needs

- Review and update your job descriptions
- Get to know specific job requirements
- Identify which certifications a PST must obtain
- Conduct a self-assessment and identify any fiscal impacts

#### Engage your training subject-matter experts

- Identify learning objectives
- Align your training program with ECC operations
- Implement evaluation methods

#### Seek advice from other ECCs

- Be creative, make your training program relative to the adult learner
- Design instructional methods appropriate for different generational learners
- Review neighboring jurisdictions' training programs

#### Review often and make changes

- Review the training program
- Develop a process to keep the training program current and updated
- Make changes as often as necessary to ensure accuracy

## 2 Background

The 911 PST is a critical link throughout the entire 911 call report and response from the moment the 911 system is accessed to the dispatch of responders to the close-out of public safety units and the legal documentation of the request for assistance. The graphic below details all the support services and processes that a telecommunicator performs throughout the life of a 911 call or request for service.

# CONTINUUM OF A CALL

Work performed by a 911 public safety telecommunicator

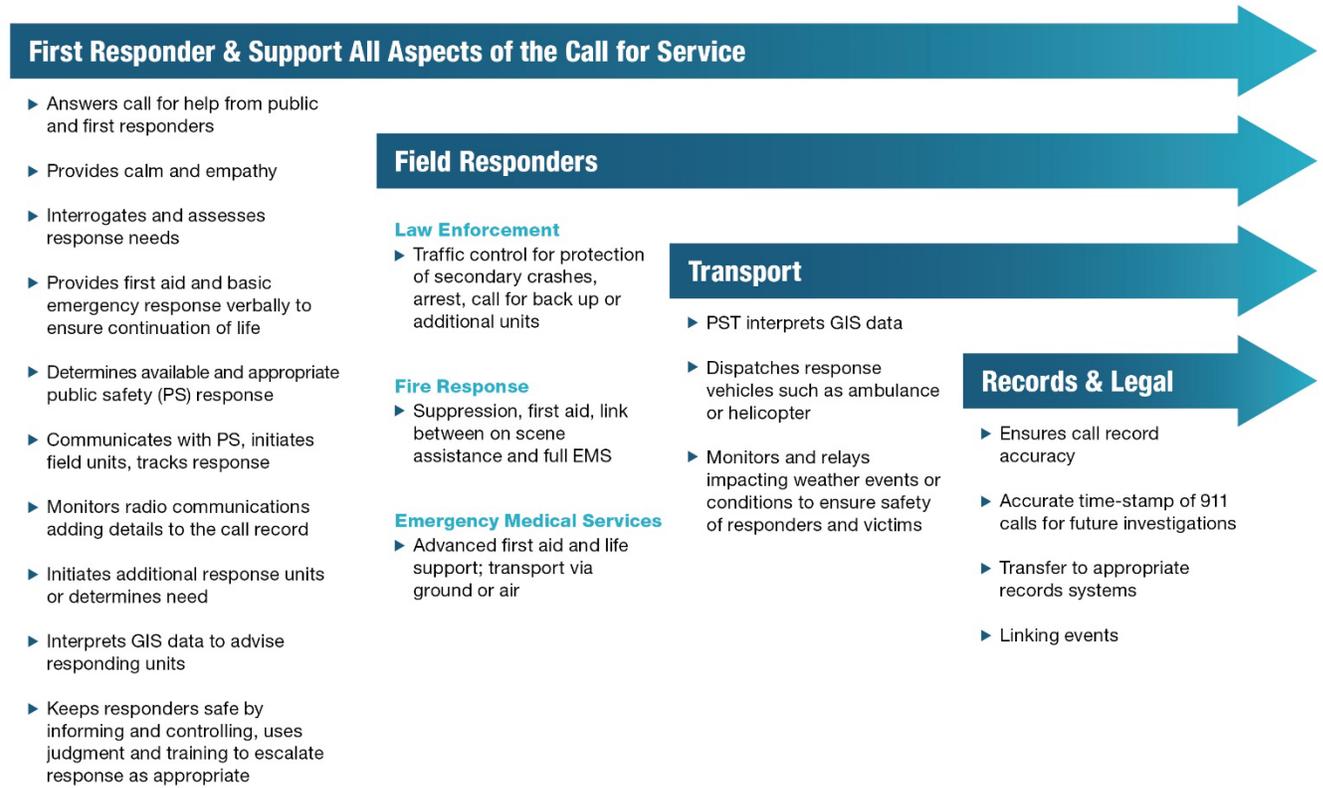


Figure 1: Telecommunicator Continuum of a Call

Each year millions of calls are made to 911. The estimated 98,300<sup>1</sup> dedicated men and women who answer those calls are facing a time of great change as their careers, roles, and responsibilities move from a legacy environment to a Next Generation 911 (NG911) environment. Their roles in providing lifesaving and protective care include such tasks as:

- Helping to calm a terrified teenager hiding in a closet during a home invasion, while simultaneously providing information about the incident to first responders while they rush to the scene
- Directing a frightened caller on how to safely escape a burning building or take protective actions if they are trapped
- Providing critical lifesaving instructions such as first aid instructions (e.g., control bleeding or ABCs [airway, breathing, circulation/compression]) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions to a panicked parent holding a lifeless child

<sup>1</sup> Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers. Occupational Outlook Handbook. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/police-fire-and-ambulance-dispatchers.htm#tab-1>. Last accessed 05/19/2021.

These dedicated professionals are trained to stay on the line with callers during emergent situations and provide a sense of calm or even lifesaving instructions in the worst times of callers' lives. However, even with the expectations and stressful demands of the position, they are placed in a clerical/administrative job category for classification and reporting purposes.

The United States (U.S.) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under the Department of Labor, is responsible for data collection that supports and is used to determine the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data.<sup>2</sup> The data are used by OMB, which has the ultimate responsibility for data interpretation and classification determinations. The classifications are reviewed every ten years, and, in 2017, the efforts of 911 professionals failed to convince OMB to make a classification change due to a lack of quantifiable and measurable data for the PST profession. Part two of this four-part toolkit will help guide ECCs in the assessment or development of training programs that lead to data that will help to support the reclassification effort.

## 2.1 Moving Forward

It is in the best interest of the 911 community to garner support and build documentation for the possible reclassification of the PST. This includes updating job descriptions and establishing (if none formally exist) or expanding training programs that support the knowledge and skills required for the modern PST.

While data for existing training program requirements is only collected and reported at a state level, it is widely understood that every agency that answers 911 calls in their community has some sort of training requirements. The requirements may not be highly formalized, but virtually no one is able or expected to sit down at a 911 console today and handle calls without training. Some training programs are weeks or months long; some include fieldwork directly with first responders. Some programs are classroom-oriented (resident or at an academy), and some are just on the job. There is assuredly significant training in virtually all 5,400+ PSAPs. Most agencies do not consider a PST fully trained until a full year of service has passed. Shadowing a seasoned PST is not uncommon for weeks before a first call is independently handled. Supervisory oversight and quality assurance (QA) monitoring by a training supervisor are common, especially in large ECCs.

Training, certification, and continuing education are important for earning and maintaining qualifications that are important to the PST profession and supporting the lifesaving work performed by the PST. It is also important to align training with requirements of other public safety professions that are supported by the work performed by the PST, such as emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement and fire response. In May of 2022 a review of all state 911 statutes revealed that only 7 states have no certification or training requirements for PSTs. No data could be found on two states. A complete list of states and a comparison of their status from 2020 to 2022 can be found in Appendix F.

---

<sup>2</sup> Standard Occupational Classification. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>. Last accessed 05/19/2021.

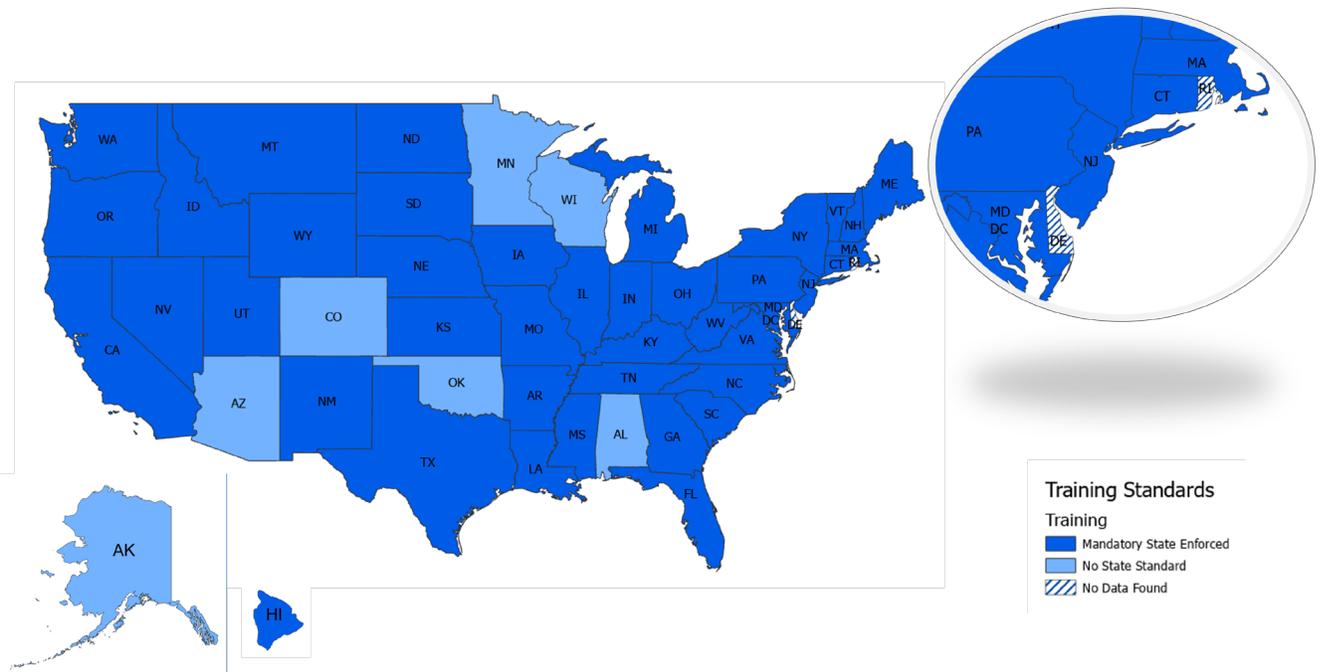


Figure 2: States with Training Standards

While the 911 community understands the evolution of the telecommunicator position over the past decade, many training programs do not adequately prepare PSTs for the demands of today’s 911 environment. It is imperative that 911 directors, training personnel, and decision-makers develop training programs to accurately reflect the responsibilities of the PST in today’s technical and complex emergency communications environment.

### 3 The Importance of a Formal Training Program

With the millions of 911 calls placed each year, the need for training standards is vital. State legislators, agencies, and individuals all play a role in ensuring that a PST is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to execute their job duties and tasks properly. The importance of the PST’s role stresses the importance of employees who are well-qualified and well-trained.

Just as there is no one-size-fits-all solution for ECCs, as the roles and responsibilities vary greatly from center to center, there is no simple answer to building the perfect employee training program. It is a multi-step approach that begins with ECCs identifying the PSTs’ responsibilities and key job knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to be successful. ECCs are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and adopt national standards and best practices. Identifying and adopting certification programs both protect the public and validate the knowledge a PST must possess. Training programs should seek to meet the needs of new hires and veteran PSTs, highlighting the need for continuing education in a comprehensive training program. The graphic below illustrates the process that ECCs should walk through when developing a PST training program specific to their operations and the work performed by the PST.



### 3.1 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

The knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary to be successful as a PST are vast and proficiency in the position requires significant training. Training programs should focus on teaching the knowledge and skills that a PST will need to be able to execute their job properly. While abilities are an innate attribute to that person, they can be sharpened and increased through training. Below is a comprehensive list of KSAs that are important to PSTs and can be found in Appendix A, PST Responsibilities and Key Job Skills and Tasks.

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Geography</li> <li>•Phone and computer basics</li> <li>•Stress management</li> <li>•Chain of command</li> <li>•Liability</li> <li>•Terminology</li> <li>•Roles and responsibilities</li> <li>•Agency</li> <li>•Performance standards</li> <li>•Laws, statutes, and codes</li> <li>•Incident mangement</li> <li>•Governmental standards</li> <li>•Technology</li> <li>•Risk assessment</li> <li>•Social media</li> <li>•Automated data</li> <li>•Video messaging</li> <li>•Incident command</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Keyboarding/Typing</li> <li>•Multitasking</li> <li>•Decision-making</li> <li>•Critical thinking</li> <li>•Verbal and written communications skills</li> <li>•Ability to work on a team</li> <li>•Active listening/hearing</li> <li>•Customer service</li> <li>•Computer</li> <li>•Telephony</li> <li>•Call control</li> <li>•Conflict resolution</li> <li>•Problem solving</li> <li>•Analytical</li> <li>•Troubleshooting</li> <li>•Text messaging</li> <li>•Data analytics</li> <li>•Social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Quick decision-making</li> <li>•Empathy</li> <li>•Respect</li> <li>•Patience</li> <li>•Maturity</li> <li>•Even-tempered</li> <li>•Integrity</li> <li>•Ethical</li> <li>•Life-long learner</li> <li>•Dependable</li> <li>•Flexible</li> <li>•Efficient</li> <li>•Tolerant</li> <li>•Analytical</li> <li>•Detail orientated</li> </ul>

Figure 3: KSAs

### 3.2 Best Practices

In May 2016, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) National 911 Program (Program) published the *Recommended Minimum Training Guidelines for the Telecommunicator*. The goal was to identify nationally recognized, universally accepted, minimum topics that can be used to train aspiring and current PSTs and which provide the foundation for their ongoing professional development and continuing education elements.

While the Program facilitated the project by providing a forum for discussion and development, the guidelines are not federally owned or mandated; they are the joint product of members of the 911 industry and 911 subject-matter experts from across the nation. The guidelines identify the recommended minimum topics to be included in any PST training program. These topics were identified by the working group, with input from other key stakeholders representing the 911 community.

Per the guidelines: “These recommended topics are suggested for inclusion in minimum training for those who aspire to the role of telecommunicator (call-taker and/or dispatcher) as defined by the authority having jurisdiction.”<sup>3</sup>

While the full document can be found at [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov), below are the key elements of the training program, and Appendix B, Model Training Program, provides more details regarding the types of training topics that could be taught in each section. Agencies can use this information to form the basis of their training program or as a place to begin a gap analysis if a training program is already in place. Of course, agencies can always go above and beyond the minimum recommendations and should be specific to the agency.



Figure 4: Minimum Training Guidelines Key Elements

---

<sup>3</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration National 911 Program, *Recommended Minimum Training Guidelines for the Telecommunicator*. (May 2016)  
[https://www.911.gov/pdf/Minimum\\_Training\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_911\\_Telecommunicator\\_2016.pdf](https://www.911.gov/pdf/Minimum_Training_Guidelines_for_911_Telecommunicator_2016.pdf)

### 3.3 Standards

Several 911 industry bodies are recognized as standards development organizations by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and focus on creating and refining standards and best practices to help progress all aspects of 911 (e.g., technology, operations, training, etc.). Those with a strong focus on training include:

- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International
- National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Additionally, several other organizations and vendors have taken a vested interest in the training of PSTs.

Standards are developed by stakeholders from across the industry based on best practices and data that proves repetitive and precise processes result in stronger outcomes. According to ANSI, only one organization can develop a standard on a specific topic; therefore, in some cases, industry organizations collaborate to develop a joint standard.

The following are approved American National Standards (ANS) that have been developed to train ECC personnel. The list is not all-inclusive.

Table 1: Training Standards and Best Practices

Document Number	Standard and/or Best Practice
APCO ANS 3.103.2.2015	<i>Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety PSTs®</i>
APCO ANS 3.108.2-2018	<i>Core Competencies and Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Communications Instructor</i>
APCO ANS 1.115.1-2018	<i>APCO Core Competencies, Operational Factors, and Training for Next Generation Technologies in Public Safety Communications</i>
APCO ANS 3.102.2-2017	<i>Core Competencies and Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Communications Supervisor</i>
APCO ANS 3.101.3-2017	<i>Core Competencies and Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Communications Training Officer (CTO)</i>
APCO ANS 1.113.1-2019	<i>Public Safety Communications Incident Handling Process</i>
APCO/NENA ANS 3.105.1-2015	<i>Minimum Training Standard for TTY/TDD Use in the Public Safety Communications Center</i>
APCO ANS 3.110.1-2019	<i>Cybersecurity Training for Public Safety Communications Personnel</i>

Document Number	Standard and/or Best Practice
APCO ANS 1.101.3-2015	<i>Standard for Public Safety Telecommunicators When Responding to Calls of Missing, Abducted and Sexually Exploited Children</i>
APCO ANS 1.112.2-2020	<i>Best Practices for the Use of Social Media in Public Safety Communications</i>
NENA-STA-020.1-2020	<i>NENA Standard for 9-1-1 Call Processing</i>
NENA-STA-002.1-2013	<i>NENA Standard on 9-1-1 Acute/Traumatic and Chronic Stress Management</i>
NENA-STA-037.2-2018	<i>NENA TTY/TDD Communications Standard Operating Procedure Model Recommendation</i>
NENA-INF-022.2-2017	<i>NENA Protocol for Handling Calls Regarding Human Trafficking Information Document</i>
NENA-STA-013.2-2016	<i>Public Safety Communications &amp; Railroad Interaction Standard Operating Procedures</i>
NENA-STA-038.3.1-2018	<i>NENA Standard For NORAD/FAA Notification: Airborne Events</i>
NENA-STA-001.1-2013	<i>NENA Suicide Prevention Standard</i>
NFPA 1225	<i>Standard for Emergency Services Communications</i>

### 3.4 Certifications

#### 3.4.1 PST Certifications

Attending training classes and workshops and obtaining PST certifications are paramount for a PST to succeed in the public safety environment. Industry best practices and standards identify that a successful training program enhances professional competencies through training and obtaining certifications. PST certification can result in higher pay and other benefits for the PST, such as membership in a specialty group, such as a Critical Incident Team, or becoming a Communications Training Officer.

While there are various certifications and licensure requirements across the nation, the most common in the industry include the following:

- Basic Emergency Telecommunicator (ETC)
- Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)
- Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD)
- Emergency Police Dispatch (EPD)

- CPR for Healthcare Providers
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) 100, 200, 700, and 800; advanced courses are 300 and 400
- Emergency Number Professional (ENP)
- Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL)

For more detailed information on the types of certificates and resources for PST training, see Appendix C, Certification and Training Resources.

### 3.4.2 Agency Accreditation or Certification

ECCs can seek certification of their training program to demonstrate their commitment to excellence through accreditation programs. The process to achieve accreditation is rigorous, but it demonstrates the ECC is taking steps to deliver high-quality training. Ultimately this will better prepare the PST with the skills and knowledge needed to perform their job.

Accreditation is a formal mechanism for ECCs to certify their training programs, demonstrating that the training program aligns with industry standards. Applying for accreditation and/or certification demonstrates an ECC's commitment to training.

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), through its Training Academy Accreditation, and APCO, through its Agency Training Program Certification, are formal mechanisms that lead to certification of an agency's training program.<sup>4</sup> The primary objective of both programs is to advance training and professional development.

For APCO training program certification, ECCs must demonstrate that their training program meets or exceeds all training requirements listed in APCO ANS 3.103.2.2015, *Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators*.<sup>5</sup> The contents of the standard are provided below.

---

<sup>4</sup> Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) <https://www.calea.org/training-academy> (May 2021). APCO Agency Training Program Certification <https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/comm-center-training-programs/apco-project-33-training-program-certification/> (May 2021)

<sup>5</sup> APCO ANS 3.103.2.2015, *Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators* <https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/comm-center-training-programs/training-standards-guidelines/> (March 2021)



Figure 5: APCO Minimum Training Standard Content Areas

### 3.5 Continuing Education

New technologies are integrated into emergency communications frequently. As such, PSTs may need to develop new skillsets to keep pace. PSTs need to be trained often for new skills throughout their careers. Continuing education is a vital element to this process, especially since the landscape of 911 is changing as legacy networks and systems migrate to NG911. Certain roles and responsibilities are ever-evolving and ensuring that all PSTs are aware of those changes helps to significantly reduce anxiety as well as personal and agency liability.

Continuing education could include classroom and online training. While online training is available from many sources, it is not recommended that this type of on-duty training be conducted when staff are assigned call-take or dispatch responsibilities. Best practices recommend that PSTs receive a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education annually.

The table below lists several topics that can be developed for continuing education programs.

Table 2: Training Areas

Training Topics	
Aircraft incidents	Mass casualty incidents
Animal complaints	Mass notifications
Area familiarization	Multimedia (video)
Bomb threats	NG911 technologies
Call triaging and management	Preparing for court testimony

Training Topics	
Canine resources	Press releases and media handling
Carjacking	Public works/utility contacts
Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) information entry requirements	Quality assurance/Quality improvement (QA/QI)
Crime scene management	Railroad incidents
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)	Red Cross/Salvation Army and other services
Domestic violence call handling	School Violence
Harassment/Sexual harassment training	Social media
Hate crimes	Stress management
Hazardous materials	Suicidal callers
Home invasions	Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/ Teletypewriter (TTY)
Hostage negotiations	Text-to-911
Images (pictures)	Vehicle pursuits
Incident command	Violent crimes
Interpersonal relations and team building	Warrants
Listening skills	Watercraft emergencies
Mapping/map reading	Workplace violence

In addition to in-house resources for training, numerous vendors provide public safety communications training courses, and many are available online. Appendix C, Certification and Training Resources, provides a list of training resources available to the ECC.

## 4 Next Steps

Initial and continuing education training for PSTs is exceedingly important to understand the protective work that is performed by the PST. They provide essential services to the public in an ever-expanding and rapidly changing public safety environment. PSTs play a critical role in the chain of public safety response. Their direction of the field response to the 911 caller can mean the difference between lives lost or saved. Their ability to have a critical impact on improving victim/patient, responder, and citizen safety outcomes relies on the training PSTs receive. The 911 community needs to ensure their training programs are based on nationally recommended topics and that they are used to train aspiring and current PSTs.

While the BLS reclassification process is not scheduled to begin for a few years, the time to make changes is now, so training programs are implemented in advance of the next classification effort, and the data reflects the necessary knowledge and skills required of the PSTs' roles and responsibilities of the protective work performed by the PST.

911 authorities should review their current training program for the PST positions in their operations using the documents provided in Appendix B, Model Training Program, and Appendix D, Guidance on Creating a Training Program. The model, reflective of current expectations and future NG911 requirements, has been designed to simplify the process of reviewing your training program.

Consideration also should be given to sharing this document with training personnel and other stakeholders to assist with any training program creation and the update process.

## Appendix A – PST Responsibilities and Key Job Skills and Tasks

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
Screen and assess initial calls for service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying call delivery method (phone, text, video, picture, automated data)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Callers may use traditional methods such as:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dialing 911</li> <li>▪ Using a 10-digit phone line</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Callers may also use multiple technological platforms to contact the ECC, such as:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Text-to-911</li> <li>▪ Video-to-911</li> <li>▪ Video relay services</li> <li>▪ Social media</li> </ul> </li> <li>– While other calls may be delivered without human intervention, such as:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Automated alarms</li> <li>▪ Telematics</li> <li>▪ Artificial Intelligence (gunshot detection)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Prioritizing call answering</li> <li>• Greeting caller</li> <li>• Projecting a professional demeanor</li> <li>• Providing calming instructions to obtain information</li> </ul>
Demonstrate clear and effective communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively listening</li> <li>• Conveying respect and empathy</li> <li>• Enunciating clearly while avoiding jargon with the caller</li> <li>• Controlling the call</li> <li>• Using appropriate terminology, codes, signals with field responders</li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
Ascertain incident information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtaining and verifying the incident location</li> <li>• Interpreting geographic information system (GIS) coordinate information and knowledge of mapping systems</li> <li>• Obtaining and verifying contact information</li> <li>• Rapidly determining the nature of the incident</li> <li>• Establishing when the incident happened</li> <li>• Identifying who is involved in the incident</li> <li>• Analyzing information that could include automated data feeds such as cameras, sensors, telematics</li> <li>• Using social media to investigate incident details (i.e., suicide message, images of suspects)</li> </ul>
Determine scene and responder safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrogating the caller to learn the circumstances of the emergency</li> <li>• Using multiple resources to determine situational awareness of a scene (i.e., hazardous materials or high occupancy locations, or history of previous incidents)</li> <li>• Using tools and data such as video from mobile devices, body cameras, traffic cameras, drones, and real-time location tracking to improve situational awareness and assist incident commanders on scene</li> <li>• Determining additional risks such as weapons present, medical conditions, or mobility issues of victims that complicate or threaten the health and safety of the responders and victims at the scene</li> </ul>
Identify and mitigate caller safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking that the reporting party not get involved in the situation, keep a safe distance, and remove themselves from the incident if it is an unsafe situation</li> <li>• Staying in contact with the caller to ensure their safety until responders are on scene</li> <li>• Interpreting audio cues, such as emotion and background noise</li> <li>• Recognizing indicators of psychological distress</li> </ul>
Document information accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documenting incident details quickly and accurately</li> <li>• Establishing incident priority based on written directives</li> </ul>
Caller management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using call control techniques and tactics to elicit information quickly and accurately from challenged callers</li> <li>• Using calming techniques such as persistent repetition; the use of “I” statements to break through the hysterical threshold</li> <li>• Deploying language services to assist foreign-speaking callers</li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing counsel to suicidal persons, domestic violence victims or serving as the primary contact with a hostage-taker</li> <li>• Utilizing mental health resources</li> </ul>
Take appropriate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ascertaining if public safety resource dispatch is required and relaying information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– If yes, coordinating the dispatch of the appropriate emergency services</li> <li>– If no, providing the caller with the appropriate information</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviewing request for service details</li> <li>• Informing caller of actions and advising of appropriate updates</li> <li>• Determining the need for outside agency resources such as traffic management, roadway clearance, towing services, power and utility services, hostage negotiators, social services, etc.</li> <li>• Using internal and external agency control devices (weather notification systems, air warnings, emergency management warning system activation, etc.)</li> <li>• Using social media to inform public</li> </ul>
Provide pre-arrival life-safety instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing pre-arrival instructions for law enforcement events, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Suicidal persons</li> <li>– Active shooter events</li> <li>– Deescalating persons in crisis (post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], mental illness)</li> <li>– Separating domestic violence victim from the abuser</li> <li>– Protecting children at the scene</li> <li>– Serving as a hostage negotiator</li> <li>– Preliminary clearance of roadway obstructions to prevent further injury or secondary accidents</li> <li>– Advice to crash victims to prevent further injury</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Providing pre-arrival instructions for fire events, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Escaping a structure fire</li> <li>– Protection for persons trapped in a fire</li> <li>– Wildland fire evacuation</li> <li>– Avalanche disasters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accelerator stuck</li> <li>- Sinking vehicle</li> <li>• Providing lifesaving instructions for medical events, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bleeding control</li> <li>- Choking/airway clearance</li> <li>- CPR</li> <li>- Respiratory arrest</li> <li>- Cardiac arrest</li> <li>- Drowning</li> <li>- Childbirth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Process requests for service for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making notifications</li> <li>• Using federal and state databases to inquire about driver license statuses, registrations, and wanted checks, etc.</li> </ul>
Record data regarding the incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a CAD incident</li> <li>• Documenting important and necessary call details for response awareness and responder protection</li> <li>• Updating the CAD incident</li> <li>• Additional data collection from the same or other callers reporting the incident</li> </ul>
Initiate incident response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigning units to the incident</li> <li>• Relaying pertinent incident information</li> <li>• Obtaining unit acknowledgment</li> <li>• Coordinating available resources</li> <li>• Relaying updates to units</li> <li>• Broadcasting be on the lookouts (BOLOs) or attempt to locate (ATL) messages</li> <li>• Disseminating information to other resources</li> <li>• Anticipating potential escalation</li> <li>• Performing status checks</li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
Coordinate during events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifying supervisors</li> <li>• Notifying appropriate resources</li> <li>• Corresponding with other agencies</li> <li>• Activating mutual aid, when applicable</li> <li>• Disseminating interdepartmental intelligence</li> <li>• Providing shift briefings</li> </ul>
Control radio traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring radio channel(s)</li> <li>• Active listening and awareness techniques</li> <li>• Acknowledging radio traffic</li> <li>• Complying with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations</li> </ul>
Participate in post-incident activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing testimony</li> <li>• Testifying in court proceedings</li> <li>• Participating in call critique and QA review sessions</li> <li>• Providing or requesting peer support and debriefings</li> <li>• Participating in critical incident stress management (CISM) debriefings</li> <li>• Participating in after-action report meetings</li> </ul>
Operate agency technology and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating telephony system effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Answering incoming calls</li> <li>– Placing outgoing calls</li> <li>– Performing conference calls</li> <li>– Placing calls on hold if appropriate</li> <li>– Performing appropriate transfers</li> <li>– Utilizing text-to-911 programs</li> <li>– Rapidly identifying and recognizing service interruptions such as equipment failures, cybersecurity breaches, swatting, slamming or spamming incidents, or denial of service (DOS) attacks</li> <li>– Operating teletypewriter (TTY)/telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD)</li> <li>– Responding to multimedia sessions/short message sessions (MMS/SMS)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Responding to video-relayed information</li> <li>• Operating technology systems such as CAD, call-handling equipment (CHE), logging recorder systems, traffic cameras, traffic lights, perimeter cameras, radio technology, alarms, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accessing incident data</li> <li>– Updating incident data</li> <li>– Assigning appropriate units</li> <li>– Interpreting other sensor data such as automatic emergency notification from law enforcement vehicles or body sensors, biometric alarms, and notifications</li> <li>– Interpreting smart building data and sensors, including video feeds, hazmat</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Utilizing map/GIS programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifying the location of the incident</li> <li>– Interpreting automatic number identification/automatic location identification (ANI/ALI) to locate emergencies</li> <li>– Plotting GPS coordinates</li> <li>– Providing directions</li> <li>– Using automatic vehicle location (AVL) data to track units</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Operating radio systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dispatching calls</li> <li>– Relaying information</li> <li>– Providing updated information</li> <li>– Maintaining current status of units</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Operating RMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accessing records</li> <li>– Updating records</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maintaining equipment functionality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Testing equipment</li> <li>– Troubleshooting equipment</li> <li>– Reporting problems</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Responsibility	Key Job Skills and Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Applying contingency plans</li> <li>• Operating computer systems               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Successful passing of required background checks and clearances to operate sensitive databases.</li> <li>– Accessing database information (National Crime Information Center [NCIC], local/state crime network, Integrated Public Alert and Warning System [IPAWS])</li> <li>– Operating mass notification software</li> <li>– Using social media platforms</li> <li>– Conducting inquiries</li> <li>– Updating/Modifying/Maintaining systems</li> <li>– Following regulations</li> <li>– Maintaining systems</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Enhance professional competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seek additional training</li> <li>• Completing training and certifications required for assigned PST position</li> <li>• Completing continuing education and career development</li> <li>• Following established ECC policies and procedures</li> <li>• Adhering to federal disclosure and privacy laws</li> <li>• Using debriefing tools, stress management techniques, and critical incident response models</li> </ul>

## Appendix B – Model Training Program

This section lists the categories and recommended training topics from the Program's *Recommended Minimum Training Guidelines for the Telecommunicator*.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Introduction, Mission, Terminology
- b. Public Safety Team
- c. Ethics, Professionalism, Values, Personal Conduct, Image
- d. Policies, Procedures, Rules, Regulations
- e. Duties and Responsibilities
- f. Communities and Agencies Served
- g. Responder Safety

### 2. Legal Concepts

- a. Liability, Confidentiality, Negligence, Duty
- b. Law Enforcement Agencies
- c. Fire/Rescue Agencies
- d. EMS Agencies
- e. Public Safety Communications Agencies
- f. Documentation, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Recording, and Records Retention
- g. Privacy Laws

### 3. Interpersonal Communications

- a. Communication Techniques
- b. Information Processing, Communication Cycle
- c. Problem Solving, Critical Thinking
- d. Customer Service
- e. Diversity/Demographics
- f. Non-Native-Language Callers
- g. Communications-Impaired Callers

### 4. Emergency Communications Technology

- a. Telephony Technologies (e.g., PBX/MLTS/VoIP)
- b. Basic 9-1-1 and Enhanced 9-1-1
- c. Automatic Number Identification (ANI)/Automatic Location Identification (ALI)
- d. Wireless Phase I and Wireless Phase II
- e. Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)

---

<sup>6</sup> Section II – Categorical Explanation and Recommended Training Topics  
[https://www.911.gov/pdf/Minimum\\_Training\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_911\\_Telecommunicator\\_2016.pdf](https://www.911.gov/pdf/Minimum_Training_Guidelines_for_911_Telecommunicator_2016.pdf)

- f. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Teletypewriter (TTY)/Telephone Relay Service (TRS)
- g. Text to 9-1-1
- h. Telematics
- i. Computerized Mapping/Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- j. Logging Records
- k. Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems
- l. Mobile Data Systems, Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), Paging, Alarms, etc.
- m. Call Transfers, Alternate and Default Routing, etc.
- n. Mass Notification
- o. Security Breaches, Cybersecurity Threats

## **5. Call Processing**

- a. Call Receiving
- b. Interviewing/Interrogation Techniques
- c. Controlling the Call
- d. Managing High-Risk Calls
- e. Managing Specialty Calls
- f. Call Categorization/Prioritization
- g. Event Categorization
- h. Homeland Security/Terrorism/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- i. Aircraft/Rail Incident/Marine
- j. Hazardous Materials Incidents
- k. Missing/Exploited/Trafficked Persons
- l. Fire Service Overview
- m. Fire Service Call Processing
- n. Fire Service Dispatching
- o. EMS Overview
- p. EMS Call Processing
- q. EMS Call Dispatching
- r. Structured Call-Taking Protocols and Standards Overview
- s. Law Enforcement Overview
- t. Law Enforcement Call Processing
- u. Law Enforcement Dispatching
- v. Responder-Initiated Calls
- w. Special-Needs Callers

## **6. Emergency Management**

- a. Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS)
- b. National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- c. Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities
- d. Disaster Preparedness
- e. Mutual-Aid/Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT)

**7. Radio Communication**

- a. Radio Communication Techniques
- b. Radio Technology and Equipment
- c. Rationale for Radio Procedures and Protocols
- d. Radio Discipline
- e. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rules

**8. Stress Management**

- a. Definition, Causation, Identification
- b. Strategies for Dealing with Stress
- c. Management of Critical Incident Stress

**9. Quality Assurance**

- a. Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Control (QC)/Quality Improvement (QI)
- b. DOR/Skills Performance Testing/Performance Standards
- c. Identify Trends from QA to Address in Continuing Education/In-Service for QI

**10. On-the-Job Training**

- a. Agency and Departmental Policies and Procedures
- b. Agency and Departmental Information Technologies Operations
- c. Interagency Networks and Databases
- d. Console Systems and Equipment
- e. Structure of Local Governance
- f. National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
- g. National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS)
- h. Governmental and Private Resources
- i. Media/Information Dissemination
- j. Geography/GIS
- k. Documentation, FOIA Requirements, Recording, and Records Retention
- l. Call-Tracing and Records-Retrieval Procedures
- m. Records Management Systems (RMS)
- n. Roles of Federal Government Resources

## Appendix C – Certification and Training Resources

### *Basic Telecommunicator Training and Certification*

Course	Provider	Hours	Website
Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST)	APCO	40 hours	<a href="https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/public-safety-telecommunicator-pst/">https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/public-safety-telecommunicator-pst/</a>
ETC (Emergency Telecommunicator)	International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED)	40 hours	<a href="https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=etc-tab">https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=etc-tab</a>
Public Safety Telecommunicator	PowerPhone	40 hours	<a href="https://powerphone.com/powerphone-launches-public-safety-telecommunicator-course/">https://powerphone.com/powerphone-launches-public-safety-telecommunicator-course/</a>
CPR for Healthcare Providers	Numerous	Varies	Multiple
NIMS ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800; advanced courses 300 and 400	FEMA	Varies	<a href="https://training.fema.gov/nims/">https://training.fema.gov/nims/</a>

### *Protocol Training and Certification*

Course	Provider	Hours	Website
Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD)	APCO	32 hours	<a href="https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/emergency-medical-dispatch-emd/emergency-medical-dispatcher-emd/">https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/emergency-medical-dispatch-emd/emergency-medical-dispatcher-emd/</a>
Law Enforcement Communications (LEC)	APCO	32 hours	<a href="https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/law-enforcement/law-enforcement-communications-lec/">https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/law-enforcement/law-enforcement-communications-lec/</a>
Fire Service Communications (FSC)	APCO	32 hours	<a href="https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/fire-service-dispatch/fire-service-communications/">https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/disciplines/fire-service-dispatch/fire-service-communications/</a>
Emergency Medical Dispatch	IAED	24 hours	<a href="https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=medical-tab">https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=medical-tab</a>
Emergency Fire Dispatch	IAED	24 hours	<a href="https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=fire-tab">https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=fire-tab</a>

Course	Provider	Hours	Website
Emergency Police Dispatch	IAED	24 hours	<a href="https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=police-tab">https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/courses-and-training?tab=police-tab</a>
Emergency Medical Dispatch	PowerPhone	24 hours	<a href="https://powerphone.com/sp_faq/emergency-medical-dispatch/">https://powerphone.com/sp_faq/emergency-medical-dispatch/</a>
Law Enforcement Dispatch	PowerPhone	24 hours	<a href="https://powerphone.com/sp_faq/law-enforcement-dispatch/">https://powerphone.com/sp_faq/law-enforcement-dispatch/</a>
Fire Service Dispatch	PowerPhone	24 hours	<a href="https://powerphone.com/sp_faq/fire-service-dispatch/">https://powerphone.com/sp_faq/fire-service-dispatch/</a>

### *Advanced Certifications*

Course	Provider	Website
Emergency Number Professional (ENP)	NENA	<a href="https://www.nena.org/page/enpcertification2017">https://www.nena.org/page/enpcertification2017</a>
Registered Public-Safety Leader (RPL)	APCO	<a href="https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/leadership-programs/registered-public-safety-leader-rpl/">https://www.apcointl.org/training-and-certification/leadership-programs/registered-public-safety-leader-rpl/</a>

### *Training Resources*

Resources	
<a href="#">APCO</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White papers</li> <li>• Articles</li> <li>• Certification</li> <li>• In-person courses</li> <li>• Online courses</li> <li>• Webinars</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Cybersecurity &amp; Infrastructure Security Agency</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security tips</li> <li>• Cybersecurity training</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Denise Amber Lee Foundation</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> </ul>
<a href="#">The Dispatch Lab</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online courses</li> <li>• Onsite training</li> </ul>
<a href="#">IAED</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training programs</li> <li>• Continuing education programs</li> </ul>

## Resources

<a href="#">National Association of State 911 Administrators</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles</li> <li>• White papers</li> </ul>
<a href="#">NENA</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White papers</li> <li>• Articles</li> <li>• In-person courses</li> <li>• Virtual courses</li> <li>• Certification</li> <li>• Webinars</li> </ul>
<a href="#">911 Training Institute</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Podcasts</li> <li>• Videos</li> <li>• Documents</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Police Legal Sciences: Dispatch Pro</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online courses</li> </ul>
<a href="#">PowerPhone – Dispatch U</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-person courses</li> <li>• Training programs</li> <li>• Continuing education programs</li> </ul>
<a href="#">The Public Safety Group</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video on demand</li> <li>• Training program</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Public Safety Training Consultants</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-person courses</li> <li>• Training programs</li> <li>• Online courses</li> <li>• 2-minute trainings</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Virtual Academy</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video on demand</li> </ul>

## Appendix D – Guidance on Creating a Formal Training Program

### What is a training program?

A training program is not a one-size-fits-all approach. There is no simple answer to building the perfect PST training program. But there are a few elements that are consistently present. Ultimately the benefits of a well-executed training program include:

- Develops skillsets
- Increases knowledge
- Boosts performance
- Promotes employee retention

### How to use this guidance document

While this guidance document is relevant to the entire 911 community, its use is specifically geared toward those responsible for creating and updating training programs.

Each training program topic area contains two major components (see figure below). For each topic area, sample language has been provided, as well as further “advice and tips” to take into consideration.

#### **Guidance**

Provides an overview of the topic area, an explanation of the area’s crucial factors, and recommendations for avoiding pitfalls

#### **Sample Language**

Provides sample language that can be “cut-and-pasted” and easily modified to align with ECC-specific requirements

### Before you get started ... a checklist

#### ✓ Understand your training needs

The most important step before undertaking a review of your training program is to review your job descriptions and written directives to ensure they are up to date and detail the specific skills and knowledge a PST will need. It is important to have a full grasp on any legislative requirements with which the ECC must comply, as well as identify any certifications a PST must obtain. Conducting a self-assessment may expose gaps in the training program that will need to be addressed. ECCs also should identify any fiscal impacts and develop a budget. A lot of training is free, and a small budget should not prohibit training. ECCs may need to be creative in the methods and delivery of training.

✓ Engage your training subject-matter experts

Your training subject-matter experts (SMEs) are a great resource to engage in establishing program learning objectives. Learning objectives need to align with current ECC operations. Evaluation methods, to assess if learning objectives have been achieved, also are important.

✓ Seek advice from other ECCs

Be creative—make your training program relative to the adult learner. Review your neighbors' training programs. They can serve as a resource, so you do not have to start from scratch. Including training for veteran PSTs is just as important as new hire training.

✓ Review often and make changes

Training programs should be viewed as a living and breathing document. Develop a process to keep the training program current and updated. Make changes and update as often as necessary to keep the program accurate and relevant.

## Training Program Guidance, Sample Language, and Examples

Using a curriculum will help identify the components of the training program. This is a comprehensive set of learning objectives, content, materials, and methods for evaluation for the participant to assure they attained the training goals. *A curriculum is not a lesson plan.*

There are several steps for developing a curriculum. Using this guidebook will help you through the process of developing a training program. Multiple 911 training programs were reviewed, and this is a culmination of the best practices for developing a training program.

## Mission and Vision of the ECC

### Guidance

Determine the ECC's organizational objectives. Having a clear vision of the mission of the ECC will set the foundation for identifying the training needs.

### Sample Language

*Get the right people, to the right place, in the right time.*

## Training Needs

### Guidance

Assess the training needs of the ECC. Work with new hires and veteran PSTs to determine the types of training programs needed and who needs training. Compare your training program to your ECC's written directives and industry best practices and standards. Make notes of any gaps or updates that need to be done.

### Tips and Advice

Budgets can be a constraint to some ECCs, so it may not be possible to meet all the needs. However, many resources for free training exist.

### Sample Language

*Need:*

*Every six months, complete Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) training*

*Text-to-911*

*Cybersecurity*

*Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training*

*CPR completed every two years*

## Learning Objectives

### Guidance

Learning objectives define learning outcomes and focus teaching. They also indicate to the PST what they are expected to learn or the skills to acquire during training. Learning objectives should be specific and observable, as well as have criteria for measuring progress towards a target.

Using the S.M.A.R.T. goals format allows an ECC to develop measurable goals.

**Specific** – Your goal should be clear and specific.

It should answer the five “W” questions :

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Why is this goal important?
- Who is involved?
- Where is it located?
- Which resources are involved?

**Measurable** – You should be able to assess progress towards a goal. You should be able to answer the question, how will I know when it's accomplished?

### Sample Language

Goals	Vague	Specific
<i>Specific</i>	<i>The trainee shall enter a call into CAD.</i>	<i>The trainee shall enter the address of the incident into CAD.</i>
<i>Measurable</i>	<i>The trainee shall answer the 911 call quickly.</i>	<i>The trainee shall answer the 911 call &lt;15 seconds 20% of the time.</i>
<i>Attainable</i>	<i>The trainee needs to know backup procedures.</i>	<i>The trainee will demonstrate how to restart the CAD system.</i>

**Attainable** – Can the person do it? Goals need to be realistic and attained to be successful.

**Results Focused** – Explain the why; make it relevant to the PST.

**Time Focused** – Every goal needs a target date by which to achieve something. This does not mean the PST has to learn everything at once, but it can serve as a checkpoint to assure the PST is on track with the measured expectations.

*Tips and Advice*

A common mistake is using words like “know” or “understand,” which are not actions that can be objectively observed.

Clear learning objectives improve teaching and learning.

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Vague</i>	<i>Specific</i>
<i>Results Focused</i>	<i>The trainee needs to demonstrate competence.</i>	<i>The trainee needs to score 80% or higher to pass the quiz.</i>
<i>Time Focused</i>	<i>The trainee needs to know commonplace names.</i>	<i>By the end of the fourth week, the trainee should know at least 50% of the commonplace names.</i>

## Methods of Instruction

**Guidance**

Select training methods. There are various ways to deliver training in an ECC. Each has advantages and disadvantages. In some cases, ECCs do not have access or the resources to conduct classroom training.

*Tips and Advice*

There are many ways to deliver training. A variety of training methods is a good approach.

**Sample Language**

- Classroom*
- Lecture*
- Group Discussion*
- Practical Exercises*
- Self-paced/Self-study*
- Virtual*
- Mentoring*

# Classroom Management

### Guidance

Effective classroom management is essential for creating an environment that is most conducive to learning. Even if you are not in a traditional classroom, setting boundaries, creating a positive environment, and accepting everyone’s differences are key to developing positive relationships between the instructor and pupils.

### Tips and Advice

Easy access to training is an important feature for employees.

### Sample Language

*Instructors should focus on keeping the training environment positive and use techniques to engage the learner.*

# Minimum Hourly Requirement

### Guidance

ECCs should include the minimum hourly requirement for each block of instruction. This will allow the PST and the instructor to understand the necessary hours to successfully complete training.

### Tips and Advice

Many industry best practices and standards do not include an hourly requirement as it varies from agency to agency and is dependent on their needs.

### Sample Language

Unit Overview			
Lesson Plan Title	(Title)	Approximate Time Needed	(Number of hours)

# Trainers

### Guidance

Select trainers who will conduct the training based on the type of training and who will be receiving it.

### Tips and Advice

A trainer could be another PST, communications training officer (CTO), supervisor, training coordinator, director/manager, or another stakeholder.

### Sample Language

*Trainers should undergo training in adult learning principles to learn how to teach the adult learner and keep them engaged in the training process.*

If the topic is on orientation, perhaps a human resource (HR) professional could conduct part of the training.



## Assessment and Evaluation

### Guidance

Assessment and evaluation of learning typically occur when an instructor evaluates the PST to a set of goals and standards. There are various methods of assessing a PST's knowledge and skills—typically either trying to measure the knowledge acquisitions or the demonstration of skills.

### *Tips and Advice*

When developing evaluation questions, questions must be reliable, relevant, and valid.

### Sample Language

#### *Knowledge Acquisition*

1. *Describe the repetitive process technique?*

#### *Skill Acquisition*

1. *Enter the following CAD alerts into the map.*

## Lessons Plans

### Guidance

Use a lesson plan template to document the course topic, the delivery method, the number of hours, the learning objectives and information to be taught, as well as how the PST will be evaluated.

### *Tips and Advice*

Having lesson plan templates ensures that different trainers use the same information to teach trainees and are not relying on memory to pass along important messages.

(Appendix E, Model Lesson Plan, contains a lesson plan template.)

### Sample Language

[Refer to Appendix E, Model Lesson Plan.]

## Daily Observation Reports (DORs)

### Guidance

The purpose of a DOR is to provide timely feedback. A DOR serves to document the tasks that a PST has been taught and observed each day. A DOR should provide both corrective actions, as well reinforcement of positive behaviors.

### *Tips and Advice*

DORs should be objective, in that they should only state the facts and not be subjective (opinions) in nature.

### Sample Language

*Today, Joe correctly entered all addresses into the CAD system.*

*Joe needed prompting to ensure he got the caller's name. Once this was discussed, Joe improved and did not forget to ask the caller's name.*

## On-the-job Training (OJT)

### Guidance

A large part of learning in the ECC is conducted by hands-on practical demonstrations of skills. OJT is a multi-step process.

1. Introduction – The trainee should be introduced to the expectations and objectives of each task.
2. Demonstration – The instructor should first demonstrate how to perform the skill.
3. Coaching – The trainee tries the skill, receiving feedback from the instructor.
4. Observation – The trainee performs the task with no feedback, demonstrating they have acquired the necessary skill.
5. Assessment – The trainee can both verbally and practically prove they have mastered the skill.

### *Tips and Advice*

Using a training environment is a great place to introduce skills and allows a trainee to become comfortable with the skill(s) before introducing them to a live 911 environment.

### Sample Language

*The trainee shall demonstrate the ability to enter a call for service into CAD that includes:*

- *Location of the incident*
- *Callback phone number*
- *Type of incident*
- *Caller's name*
- *All pertinent call information*

## Feedback on the Training Program

### **Guidance**

Since the training document is living and breathing, you should seek feedback on the training program. This can be done as classes are taught, or a yearly review. The results of the feedback can provide insight as to what is effective or ineffective. You should use these results to update training as needed.

### *Tips and Advice*

Surveys are a reliable and effective means of capturing reactions.

### **Sample Language**

1. *Do you think the training program adequately prepared you for this position?*
2. *Did training content meet your expectations?*
3. *How would you rate the quality of the training (1 to 5 ranking system)?*
4. *How would you rate the quality of the instructor (1 to 5 ranking system)?*
5. *How was the instructor/trainer's enthusiasm?*

## Recordkeeping

### **Guidance**

Each ECC should document and maintain all training and certification records per records retention policies. Many states and federal agencies have records retention policies that require ECCs to keep employee training records for a set period. Or that an ECC adopts a retention schedule.

### *Tips and Advice*

You should become familiar with the type of records to be maintained and for how long. Or adopt a retention schedule.

### **Sample Language**

*All training records shall be kept for a minimum of three years after an employee has left the ECC.*

## Appendix E – Model Lesson Plan

Author			
Name	{First name} {Last name}	Date	mm/dd/yyyy
Lesson Plan Approval	{First name} {Last name}	Date	mm/dd/yyyy
Review/Revision history	{mm/dd/yyyy},{mm/dd/yyyy},{mm/dd/yyyy},		
Unit Overview			
Lesson Plan Title	{Title}	Approximate time needed	{# of hours}
Key Lesson Points/Objectives		Lesson Description	
Resources Needed		Source of Information	
Evaluation Methods			
Conducting the Activity			

## Appendix F – Minimum Training Standards

State	2020	2022
Alabama	No State Standard	No State Standard
Alaska	No State Standard	No State Standard
Arizona	No State Standard	No State Standard
Arkansas	No Data Found	Mandatory State Enforced
California	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Colorado	No State Standard	No State Standard
Connecticut	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Delaware	Mandatory State Enforced	No Data Found
District of Columbia	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Florida	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Georgia	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Hawaii	No State Standard	Mandatory State Enforced
Idaho	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Illinois	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Indiana	No State Standard	Mandatory State Enforced
Iowa	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Kansas	No State Standard	Mandatory State Enforced
Kentucky	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Louisiana	No State Standard	Mandatory State Enforced
Maine	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Maryland	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Massachusetts	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Michigan	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Minnesota	No State Standard	No State Standard
Mississippi	No Data Found	Mandatory State Enforced
Missouri	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Montana	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced

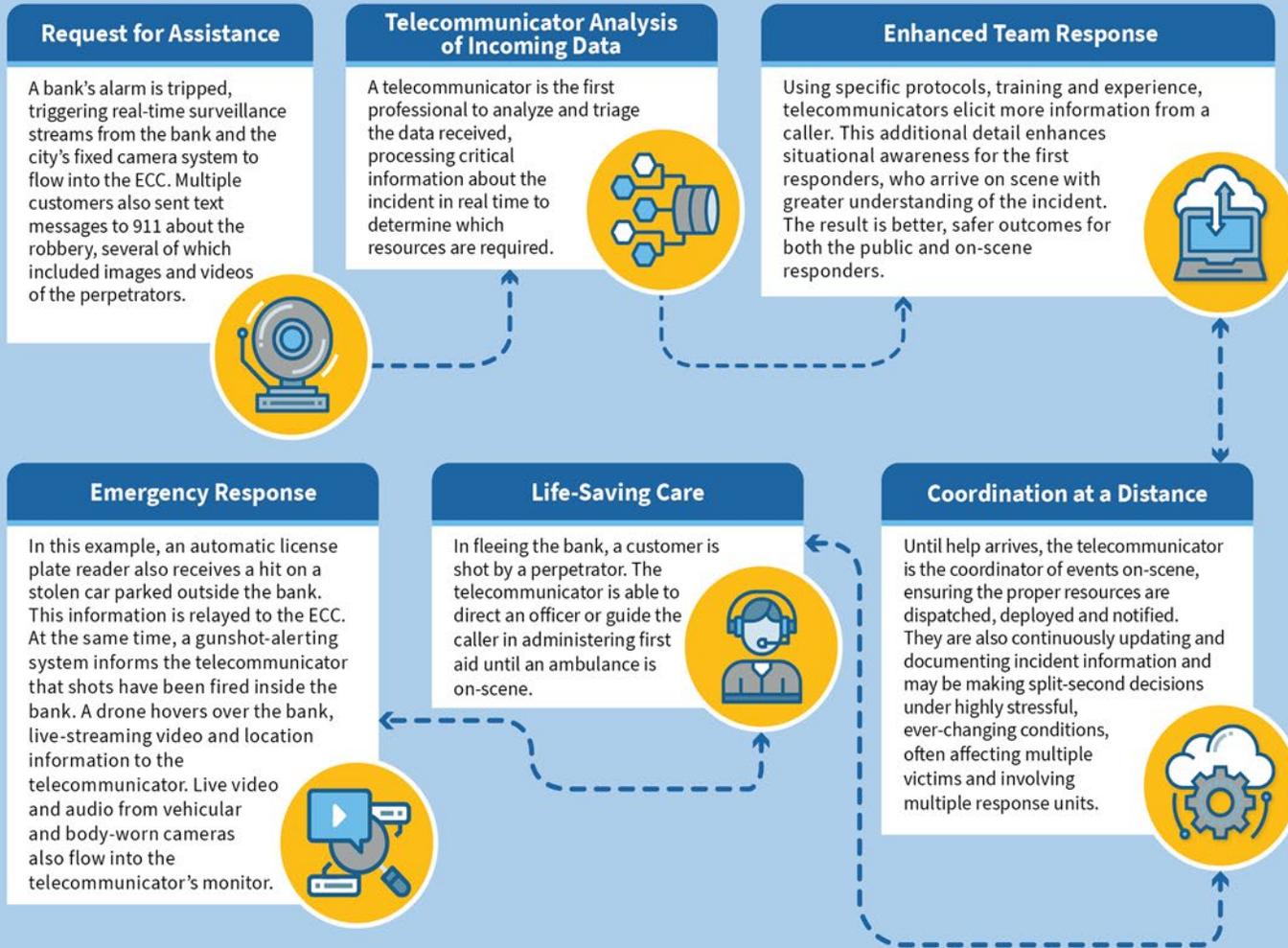
State	2020	2022
Nebraska	No State Standard	Mandatory State Enforced
Nevada	No Data Found	Mandatory State Enforced
New Hampshire	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
New Jersey	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Nex Mexico	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
New York	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
North Carolina	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
North Dakota	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Ohio	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Oklahoma	No State Standard	No State Standard
Oregon	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Pennsylvania	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Rhode Island	Mandatory State Enforced	No Data Found
South Carolina	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
South Dakota	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Tennessee	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Texas	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Utah	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Vermont	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Virginia	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced
Washington	No State Standard	Mandatory State Enforced
West Virginia	No Data Found	Mandatory State Enforced
Wisonsin	No State Standard	Mandatory State Enforced
Wyoming	Mandatory State Enforced	Mandatory State Enforced

## Appendix G – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographics

The following two graphics can be used to illustrate to an applicant, a new hire or even as a part of a presentation to agency leadership, officials and the public how a PST is involved in all aspects of the emergency response team.

# THE CRITICAL ROLE OF TODAY'S PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS

Here is just one of countless scenarios a telecommunicator may handle at their emergency communications center (ECC) when a request for assistance comes in—and how they ensure every call is handled quickly, calmly and appropriately with skill and expertise:



To learn more about the work telecommunicators do and the public safety telecommunicator reclassification effort, go to [911.gov](https://911.gov).



# CONTINUUM OF A CALL

Work performed by a 911 public safety telecommunicator

## First Responder & Support All Aspects of the Call for Service

- ▶ Answers call for help from public and first responders
- ▶ Provides calm and empathy
- ▶ Interrogates and assesses response needs
- ▶ Provides first aid and basic emergency response verbally to ensure continuation of life
- ▶ Determines available and appropriate public safety (PS) response
- ▶ Communicates with PS, initiates field units, tracks response
- ▶ Monitors radio communications adding details to the call record
- ▶ Initiates additional response units or determines need
- ▶ Interprets GIS data to advise responding units
- ▶ Keeps responders safe by informing and controlling, uses judgment and training to escalate response as appropriate

## Field Responders

### Law Enforcement

- ▶ Traffic control for protection of secondary crashes, arrest, call for back up or additional units

### Fire Response

- ▶ Suppression, first aid, link between on scene assistance and full EMS

### Emergency Medical Services

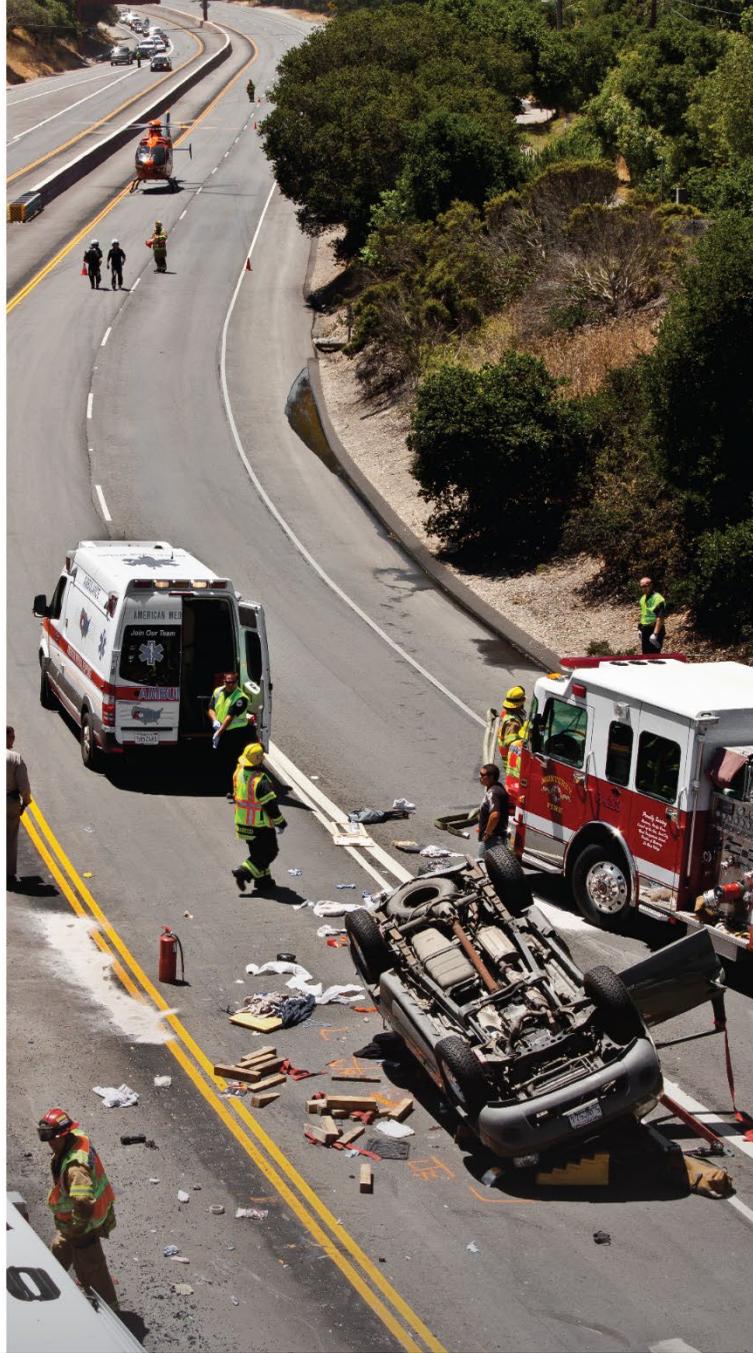
- ▶ Advanced first aid and life support; transport via ground or air

## Transport

- ▶ PST interprets GIS data
- ▶ Dispatches response vehicles such as ambulance or helicopter
- ▶ Monitors and relays impacting weather events or conditions to ensure safety of responders and victims

## Records & Legal

- ▶ Ensures call record accuracy
- ▶ Accurate time-stamp of 911 calls for future investigations
- ▶ Transfer to appropriate records systems
- ▶ Linking events





# The Operational Integration of Technology and Tools May 2022

## Acknowledgments

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA), National 911 Program, convened a working group of 911 professionals with a deep commitment to the individuals that are the first, "first responders" in any emergency. The Program provides the space to meet and the resources to assist these professionals to create the toolkit. The goal of this toolkit is to provide public safety answering point (PSAP)/emergency communications center (ECC) leaders and decision-makers with a framework to help ensure job descriptions, training programs, and operational documents adequately reflect the evolving expectations of the public safety telecommunicator. This document, entitled "Guidelines for the Operational Integration of Technology and Tools," provides a framework for evaluating, updating, and maintaining your center's written directives to ensure they equip public safety telecommunicators with an understanding of the technology and tools needed to perform their duties.

Thank you to the following industry experts who were integral in leading this effort and developing materials that will support future data-driven decisions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as a result of data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), state and local 911 agencies, and state and local policymakers. Without their contribution of time and expertise, this document would not be possible.

- Andrea Shepard, MBA, Montgomery County Emergency Communications District, Texas
- April Heinze, ENP, National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- Chad Chewing, Livingston County Central Dispatch / 911, Michigan
- Dan Henry, NENA: The 9-1-1 Association
- Daniel R. Morden, MSA, PEM, Gratiot County Central Dispatch Authority, Michigan
- Halcyon Frank, ENP, The Dispatch Lab
- Harriet Rennie-Brown, ENP, National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA)
- Jerry Eisner, RedSky Technologies
- Kevin Haight, Motorola Solutions, previously with Idaho State Police
- Mark Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Melissa Alterio, M.S., CPE, RPL, Cobb County Emergency Communications Department, Georgia
- Nathan Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Rosa Ramos, ENP, CMPC, Alameda County Regional Emergency Communications Center, California
- Roxanne VanGundy, ENP, RPL, Lyons County 911, Kansas
- Tony Leese, South East Regional Emergency Services Agency (SERESA), Michigan
- Ty Wooten, ENP, International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED), previously with NENA

# Table of Contents

1	Call to Action .....	1
2	Background .....	2
2.1	Technology in the ECC and its Uses .....	3
2.2	Moving Forward .....	7
3	Developing Clear Written Directives .....	7
3.1	Terminology Differences .....	8
3.2	Standards and Best Practices .....	8
3.3	Accreditation .....	10
4	Next Steps .....	10
	Appendix A – Guidance on Creating Written Directives .....	11
	Appendix B – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographics .....	15

# 1 Call to Action

It is vital that when a person dials 911, they receive a consistent level of 911 service—no matter where they live or travel in the United States (U.S.). Just as the role of the public safety telecommunicator (PST) has evolved, so also has the technology and tools used by public safety answering points (PSAPs), emergency communications centers (ECCs), or other emergency services providers. Gone are the days of simply answering a phone call and inputting data. Today’s modern ECCs require that PSTs have tools and technology to analyze 911 calls, texts, video, images and data, operate in a multi-dynamic, complex technical environment, as well as make mass notifications to responders and citizens as a crisis evolves.

This toolkit has been developed to help ECCs take the necessary actions to support the change in job classification of public safety telecommunicators from clerical to **protective services**. ECCs are encouraged to read and act upon all four parts of this toolkit, as necessary.

This document, *Guidelines for Operational Integration of Technology and Tools*, is part three of a four-part toolkit that addresses the steps an ECC can take to prepare for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) classification analysis as well as state-level reclassification efforts. These tools also can be used to increase professionalism in the ECC.



***This document is a call to action to evaluate, update and maintain your center’s written directives to ensure they equip PSTs with an understanding of the technology and tools needed to perform their job.***

## HISTORY

### Federal Classification

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under the Department of Labor, is responsible for the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data. “Occupations are classified based on work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education and/or training needed to perform the work.” [[Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines, 2018 SOC \(bls.gov\)](#)]

### The Decisions to Not Reclassify

BLS ultimately was unable to reclassify because of the lack of objective, measurable data; thus, the 911 telecommunicator position remains classified under the Office and Administrative Support Occupation. The decision not to reclassify PSTs from the Office and Administrative Support Occupation to Protective Services was a blow to the industry and a campaign to increase the visibility of PSTs and their roles and responsibilities was undertaken.

### Moving Forward

It is in the best interest of the 911 community to assemble objective data and information that can be used for the reclassification of the PST by updating job descriptions, training programs, and written directives to accurately depict job duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the modern PST.

For more information on the Toolkit visit [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)

This toolkit outlines the steps to create and maintain written directives that support current and emerging technologies and the responsibilities of the PST.

#### Understand your current written directives

- Get to know specific requirements (laws, regulations, and standards)
- Meet with public safety stakeholders (e.g., law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services [EMS], emergency management) to understand their needs
- Conduct a self-assessment

#### Engage your operational subject-matter experts

- Identify gaps in policies and/or procedures
- Align your written directives with ECC operations
- Incorporate the tools and technology your ECC uses into your written directives
- Compare your written directives to your training program

#### Seek advice from other ECCs

- Review neighboring jurisdictions' written directives
- Consider applying for accreditation

#### Review often and make changes

- Review written directives regularly
- Develop a process to keep written directives updated
- Make changes as often as necessary to ensure accuracy

## 2 Background

Each year millions of calls are made to 911. The estimated 98,300<sup>1</sup> dedicated men and women who answer those calls are facing a time of great change as their careers, roles, and responsibilities move from a legacy environment to a Next Generation 911 (NG911) environment. Their roles in answering 911 calls include such tasks as:

- Helping to calm a terrified teenager hiding in a closet during a home invasion, while simultaneously providing information about the incident to first responders while they rush to the scene
- Directing a frightened caller on how to safely escape a burning building or take protective actions if they are trapped
- Providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions to a panicked parent holding a lifeless child

---

<sup>1</sup> Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers. Occupational Outlook Handbook. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/police-fire-and-ambulance-dispatchers.htm#tab-1>. Last accessed 06/03/2021.

These dedicated professionals are trained with lifesaving skills to stay on the line with callers during emergent situations and provide a sense of calm in the worst times of callers' lives. However, even with the expectations and stressful demands of the positions, they currently fall into a clerical/administrative job category for classification and reporting purposes.

The United States (U.S.) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under the Department of Labor, is responsible for data collection that supports and is used to determine the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data.<sup>2</sup> The data are used by OMB, which has the ultimate responsibility for data interpretation and classification determinations. The classifications are reviewed every ten years, and, in 2017, the efforts of 911 professionals failed to convince OMB to make a classification change due to a lack of objective, measurable data required to support reclassification of the PST profession. Part three of this four-part toolkit will help guide ECCs in the development of written directives that lead to data that helps support the reclassification effort.

## 2.1 Technology in the ECC and its Uses

Initially, wireline telephones were used to simply place a voice-only 911 call and the PST received the address associated with the telephone number being used for the call based on telephone billing records. Now PSTs handle requests for service from wireline, wireless (including text messages), Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) devices and other technologies that can transmit data such as tablets, smart watches, biometric sensors, etc. PSTs must identify the location of the caller and interpret geographic information system (GIS) map data along with jurisdictional authority interpretations, verify the caller's telephone number, and gather details about the emergency and what is happening at the scene of the incident. With NG911, the capabilities of the 911 system are much more sophisticated, and the technology multiple times more complex.

PSTs not only input information from the caller, but also are now responsible for receiving data from multiple types of communication devices such as wireless phones for text-to-911, shot spotter cameras to notify of gunshots in an area, and automated data feeds perhaps from a vehicle crash. This information must then be analyzed, interpreted, and organized to be input into a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, which requires multiple fields to be populated before the incident can be sent electronically for dispatch. This input is involved and may include multiple caution notes, maps, data lookups, event histories, events in proximity, and linking of incidents—PSTs must be able to successfully navigate the CAD system and other data. Failure to properly use, evaluate, interpret, and relay this information can have devastating effects on the life and property of responders and victims.

The PST is an active and integral part of every aspect of a 911 call from the time the citizen makes a call for help, through the response and up to the time the incident is resolved and closed and units are returned to service ready for the next call. See the Continuum of a Call below for an illustration:

---

<sup>2</sup> Standard Occupational Classification. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>. Last accessed 01/09/2020.

# CONTINUUM OF A CALL

## Work performed by a 911 public safety telecommunicator

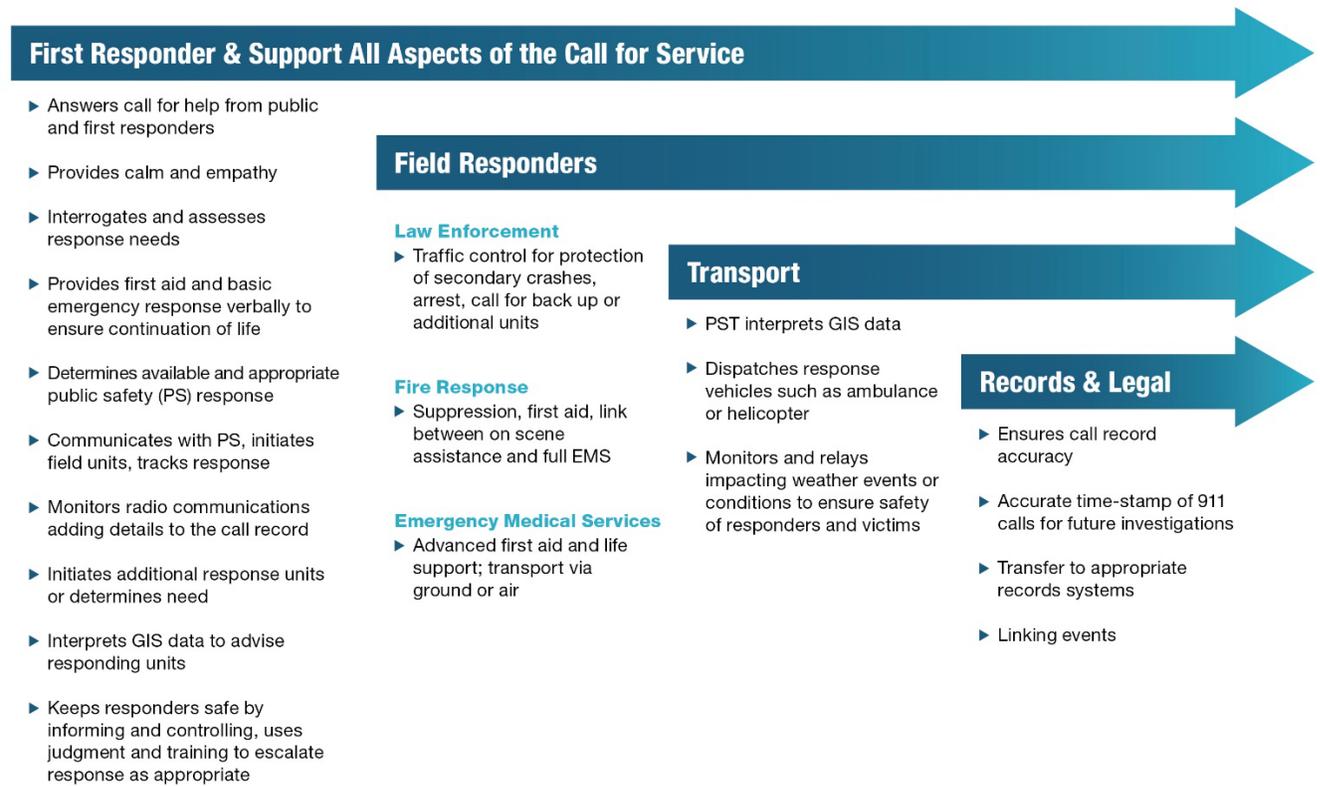


Figure 1: Telecommunicator Continuum of a Call

PSTs must be familiar with the recording devices for when they need to replay a call. And two-way radio communications occur on multiple talkgroups, often monitored by a single dispatcher. PSTs must understand the technology in order to patch (link) disparate talkgroups and even disparate radio systems. PSTs respond to emergency button activations from portable radios to determine if the responder is in danger. PSTs also monitor various alarms; use specialized global positioning system (GPS) software; alert fire stations; and identify, locate, and relay additional detail needed such as floor plans, building entrance information, on-premise chemicals, or other citizen-provided medical information, and intrusion alarm permit validation.

PSTs are trained on many call-handling, dispatching, recording, and communication devices and software, as well as backup or work-around routines when the primary technology is down. This enhanced technology, coupled with the PST's work to gain situational awareness through analyzing a caller's voice, listening for background clues, etc., helps them correctly identify and prioritize the incident and any hazards that could impact the life and safety of the responders or victims. The use of structured protocols, such as emergency medical dispatch (EMD), also allows PSTs to provide lifesaving support, including

CPR instructions or guiding a caller through childbirth, until responding agencies arrive. Below is an example of one scenario today's telecommunicator will experience.

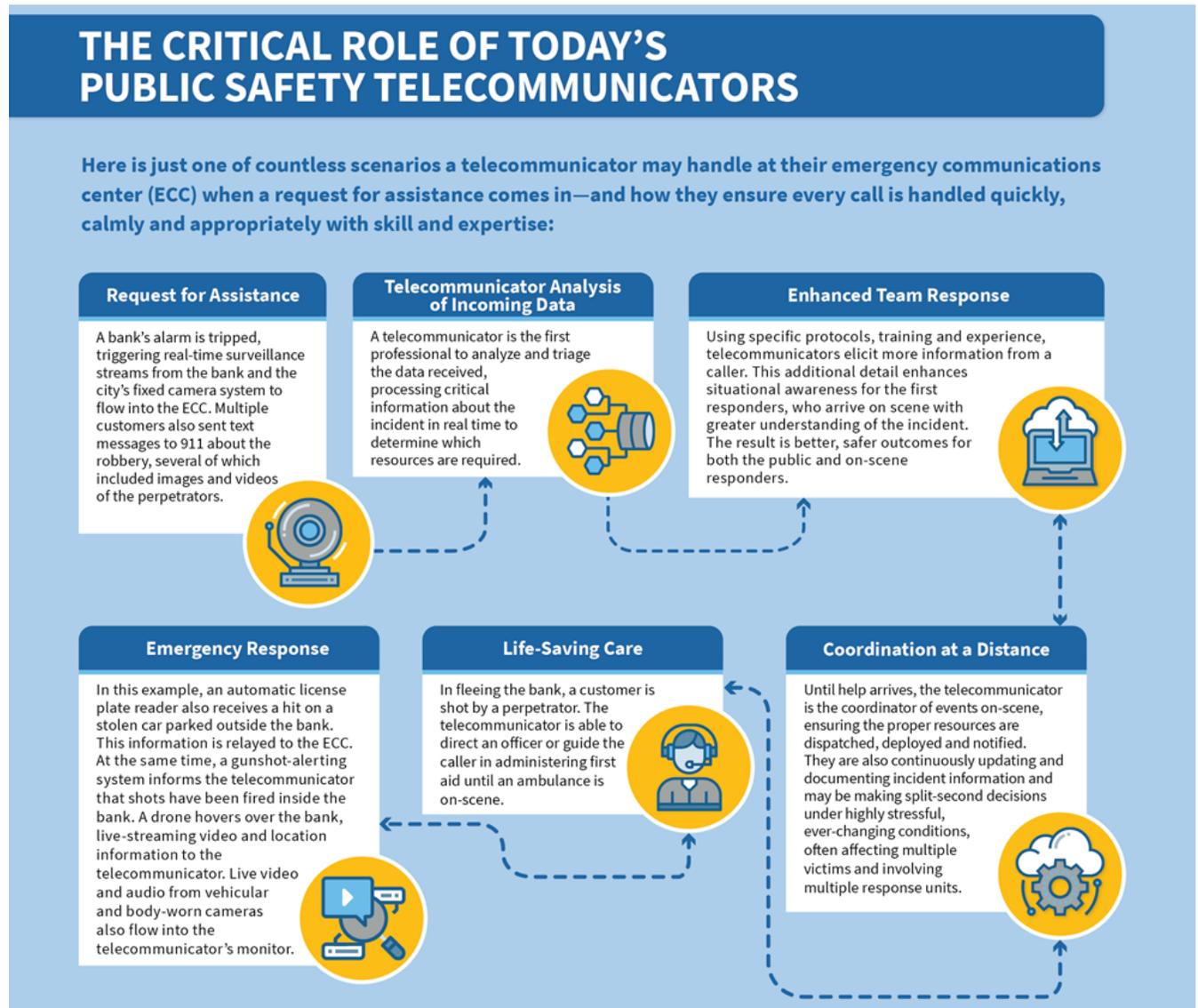


Figure 2: Example Scenario

The software, technology, and systems with which PSTs must be proficient while working in an ECC are shown below. As technology advances, the expectations of PSTs grow as well. Below are examples of all the technology that can be found in today's ECC.

Computer Applications	Geographic Information System (GIS)	Social Media	Multimedia (video, images)	Artificial Intelligence
TDD	Alarm Systems	Automatic Vehicle Location	English Language Translation Services	Radio Communication
Broadband Communication	Fire Station Alerting	Shot Spotter	Logging Recorder Playback (IRR)	Equipment Troubleshooting
Protocol Software Navigation	Mass Notification Systems	Location Verification Systems	Call-Handling Equipment	Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Database
Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)	Bank Bait Bags	Bait Vehicles	Telematics	Advanced Automatic Crash Notifications
Automated Secure Alarm Protocol (ASAP) to PSAP	Alarm or Sensor-to-Text	Over-the-Top Applications	Text-to-911	Text-from-911
Active Shooter Alarms	Mapping Software	Internet	Additional Data Repositories	

Figure 3: ECC Technology

As the job of a PST becomes more complex with evolving technology, standard operating procedures (SOPs), also referred to as directives (law enforcement) or guidelines (fire), must be written and updated.

## 2.2 Moving Forward

It is in the best interest of the 911 community to garner support and build documentation for the possible reclassification of the PST not only by updating job descriptions, human resources (HR) processes, and any outdated training programs but also by cultivating written SOPs and directives that incorporate the tools and technology used in the ECC. Documented policies, which are reviewed regularly, will help ECCs maintain high-quality operations and will demonstrate the increased expectations of the PST.

## 3 Developing Clear Written Directives

Written directives are a critical component of an ECC's operations. The policies or directives (i.e., rules) serve to reduce the possibility of human error and provide direction (or guidance in some cases) for employees to follow. Written directives create consistency in the internal and external functions of the ECC, which is paramount when dealing with callers and emergency services personnel. The more consistent and clear the process or procedure is for all staff, the less chance there will be for problems with quality.

Written directives help:

- Communicate what is expected of a PST in the performance of their duties
- Provide clear guidance on how to perform their duties, or use tools and technology
- Simplify decision-making
- Establish accountability and alignment with laws and regulations
- Serve as a foundation for the ECC's training program
- Provide a fair and equitable way to evaluate PSTs<sup>3</sup>

Written directives also provide a method of communication. As improvements or changes are made to operations or technical processes, written directives should be updated; each update then requires new or expanded training. This provides a method to communicate the process and technology changes to all employees.

Written directives ensure an ECC can meet the expectations of their partner first responder agencies. The policies can be developed to ensure alignment with responder agencies while considering the requirements and limitations of the ECC itself.

---

<sup>3</sup> Kenyon, Matt. *How To Write The Rules: Developing Your Own SOPs*. PSC Magazine, May/June 2019. [https://www.pscmagazine-digital.com/pscs/0319\\_may\\_june\\_2019/MobilePagedArticle.action?articleId=1481729#articleId1481729](https://www.pscmagazine-digital.com/pscs/0319_may_june_2019/MobilePagedArticle.action?articleId=1481729#articleId1481729)

Written directives are unique to each ECC, as the capabilities, roles, and responsibilities vary greatly among ECCs. There is no single template that will work for all agencies. Creating and updating written directives begins with the ECC understanding its local needs and applicable statutes and ordinances and identifying any gaps in policy. Written directives also form the cornerstone of any training program. The policies should provide the rules for performing a job, duty, or task, whereas the training program provides the details—directions or instructions—on how to operate a piece of technology or how to use a tool<sup>4</sup>, for example. Therefore, it is important to engage those responsible for training programs when creating or updating written directives.

**Written Directives** are the rules.

**Training Programs** provide the details.

The following subsections are items to consider when cultivating written directives.

### 3.1 Terminology Differences

Many terms are used to describe an agency’s operating manual and are often used interchangeably. Written directives can either serve as a mandatory policy, procedure, or guideline.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Protocol</b>	<b>Guideline</b>
A course or principle of action that is desired or required and adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.	Specific steps or actions to be completed; an established or official way of doing something.	A highly defined procedure placed into a reference system <sup>5</sup> ; a procedure for carrying out a prescribed course of action.	A general rule, principle, or piece of advice. <sup>6</sup>

Regardless of the terminology used in the ECC, well-developed written directives serve as a roadmap and user manual for day-to-day operations.

### 3.2 Standards and Best Practices

When creating written directives, ECCs should adopt and use industry standards and best practices to assure the effectiveness of the agency and its personnel, and that the best possible service is provided to

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> *Emergency Telecommunicator Course Manual*, International Academies of Emergency Dispatch.

<sup>6</sup> Google Definitions

[https://www.google.com/search?q=Guideline+definition&rlz=1C1GCEA\\_enUS800US800&sxsrf=ALeKk03eKkqAUURQFahRoctZqTOPDcoYCQ%3A1624285878017&ei=tqLQYJA4iuPk2g-Pv4nwAw&og=Guideline+definition&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBggAEAcQHjIGCAAQBxAeMgYIABAHEB4yBggAEAcQHjIGCAAQBxAeMgYIABAHEB4yBggAEAcQHjoHCAAQRxCwAzoHCAAQsAMQQ1Do6AhY6OgIYOfuCGgBcAJ4AIAbfogB3wGSAQMxLjGYAQCgAQKqAQGqAQdnd3Mtd2l6yAEKwAEB&scient=qsw-wiz&ved=0ahUKEwiQ65a2-KjxAhWKMVvFHY9fAj4Q4dUDCA8&uact=5](https://www.google.com/search?q=Guideline+definition&rlz=1C1GCEA_enUS800US800&sxsrf=ALeKk03eKkqAUURQFahRoctZqTOPDcoYCQ%3A1624285878017&ei=tqLQYJA4iuPk2g-Pv4nwAw&og=Guideline+definition&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBggAEAcQHjIGCAAQBxAeMgYIABAHEB4yBggAEAcQHjIGCAAQBxAeMgYIABAHEB4yBggAEAcQHjoHCAAQRxCwAzoHCAAQsAMQQ1Do6AhY6OgIYOfuCGgBcAJ4AIAbfogB3wGSAQMxLjGYAQCgAQKqAQGqAQdnd3Mtd2l6yAEKwAEB&scient=qsw-wiz&ved=0ahUKEwiQ65a2-KjxAhWKMVvFHY9fAj4Q4dUDCA8&uact=5)

citizens and first responders. Measurable standards create an objective view of 911 operations and provide for consistent interactions with the public and first responder partners.

Standards and best practices most often used in ECCs are from the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International, the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). APCO, NENA, and NFPA are each an American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-accredited standards development organization (SDO).

Definitions of written directives also vary.

<b><u>APCO</u></b>	<b><u>NENA</u></b>	<b><u>NFPA</u></b>	<b><u>SAFECOM</u></b>
Written Directives: A set of agency specific policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and guidelines. <sup>7</sup>	SOP (Standard Operating Procedure): A written directive that provides a guideline for carrying out an activity. The guideline may be made mandatory by including terms such as “shall” rather than “should” or “must” rather than “may”. <sup>8</sup>	Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Written organizational directives that establish or prescribe specific operational or administrative methods that are to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or actions. <sup>9</sup>	Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are formal, written guidelines or instructions for incident response that typically have both operational and technical components. <sup>10</sup>

The inclusion of these organizations is for informational purposes and should not be construed as an endorsement of any kind or a finite list. Federal agencies are precluded from any perception of favoritism toward any individual product, service, or company.

For more information and a comprehensive listing of standards for Enhanced 911 and NG911, visit: [https://www.911.gov/project\\_standardsforenhancedandnextgeneration911.html](https://www.911.gov/project_standardsforenhancedandnextgeneration911.html).

---

<sup>7</sup> APCO ANS 3.103.2.2015 *Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators*© <https://www.apcointl.org/download/minimum-training-standards-for-public-safety-telecommunicators-3/?wpdmdl=6288>

<sup>8</sup> NENA Master Glossary of 9-1-1 Terminology. [NENA Master Glossary - National Emergency Number Association](https://www.nena.org/terminology)

<sup>9</sup> NFPA Glossary of Terms. <https://www.nfpa.org/Codes-and-Standards/Resources/Glossary-of-Terms>. This reference is specific to NFPA 1221 (2019). Depending on the referenced standard, the definition of SOP may vary slightly.

<sup>10</sup> Standard Operating Procedures, SAFECOM. <https://www.cisa.gov/safecom/sops>

### 3.3 Accreditation

Accreditation is a voluntary process ECCs can undertake to certify that their operations, including their SOPs, meet a rigorous set of industry-accepted standards and best practices. There are two programs specific to 911 centers through which an ECC can seek standalone accreditation—CALEA® and the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED).

The inclusion of these organizations is for informational purposes and should not be construed as an endorsement of any kind. Federal agencies are precluded from any perception of favoritism toward any individual product, service, or company.

## 4 Next Steps

Creating or updating written directives to include new and existing technology is increasingly important as the job complexity of the PST increases. Understanding the importance of maintaining written directives will assure the documentation is current, accurate, and reviewed regularly.

Clearly defined written directives are vital in an ECC as they provide the rules for PSTs operating the various tools and technologies. Written directives provide the structure for how the ECC should operate. Adopting industry-recognized standards and best practices helps assure the effectiveness of the agency and that the best possible service is provided to citizens and first responder partners.

While the process for PST classification analysis is not scheduled to begin for a few years, the time to make changes is now. Ensure written directives are updated and implemented in advance of the next round of job classification research. Documenting the technology in ECCs, how each is used, and the complexity of the job also may aid the proper assignment of classification for the PST. 911 authorities should review their written directives using the documents provided in Appendix A—Guidance on Creating Written Directives.

Consideration also should be given to sharing this document with operational personnel and other stakeholders to assist with the creation of policies and procedures.

# Appendix A – Guidance on Creating Written Directives

## What are written directives?

Written directives are the rules of the ECC. They can take the format of policies, procedures, or guidelines. They are the rules for ECC operations, including the tools and technology.

## How to use this document

While this guidance document is relevant to the entire 911 community, its use is directed towards those responsible for creating and updating written directives. The use of the contents of this document is strictly voluntary.

Each written directive topic area contains two major components (see figure below). For each topic area, sample language has been provided, as well as further “advice and tips” to take into consideration.

### Guidance

Provides an overview of the topic area, an explanation of the area’s crucial factors, and recommendations for avoiding pitfalls.

### Sample Language

Provides sample language that can be “cut-and-pasted” and easily modified to align with ECC-specific requirements.

## Before you get started ... a checklist

### ✓ Understand your current written directives

Get to know specific requirements (laws, regulations, and industry standards). Meet with public safety stakeholders (law enforcement, fire, EMS] emergency management, etc.) to understand their needs. Conduct a self-assessment and identify the technology in use in your ECC.

### ✓ Engage your operational subject-matter experts

Identify gaps in policy. Align your written directives with ECC operations and those of the responders you protect. Develop the “rules” for the tools and technology your ECC uses. Compare your written directives to your current training program and assure alignment. If gaps are identified, begin to address those gaps.

### ✓ Seek advice from other ECCs

Review neighboring jurisdictions’ written directives. Consider accreditation.

✓ Review often and make changes

Review your written directives regularly and develop a process to keep written directives updated. Make changes as often as necessary to ensure accuracy.

## Written Directives Guidance, Sample Language, and Examples

Several industry resources can be used to help develop and write effective written directives. This toolkit sets a foundation on how to begin to develop written directives. (The inclusion of these organizations is for informational purposes and should not be construed as an endorsement of any kind. Federal agencies are precluded from any perception of favoritism toward any individual product, service, or company.)

Title	Resource	Link
<i>Writing Guide for Standard Operating Procedures</i>	SAFECOM	<a href="https://www.cisa.gov/safecom/sops">https://www.cisa.gov/safecom/sops</a>
<i>How To Write The Rules: Developing Your Own SOPs</i>	APCO	<a href="https://www.pscmagazine-digital.com/pscs/0319_may_june_2019">https://www.pscmagazine-digital.com/pscs/0319_may_june_2019</a>
SOP Development Course	NENA	<a href="https://www.nena.org/page/sopDevelopment">https://www.nena.org/page/sopDevelopment</a>

## Mission and Vision of the ECC

### Guidance

Determine the ECC's organizational objectives. A clear vision of the mission of the ECC will set the foundation for the direction of the agency.

### Sample Language

*Get the right people, to the right place, in the right time.*

## Gather Documentation

### Guidance

ECCs should review applicable laws, regulations, and standards, as well as conduct research on where gaps lay within policies.

Interviewing frontline workers to determine where they need more guidance is a good practice.

### Sample Language

*Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*

*Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) regulations  
Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules*

Are there local procedures that need to be followed? Enlisting the help of law enforcement, fire, and EMS first responders and emergency management personnel can be beneficial to assure you meet their needs as well.

*Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)*

## Write the Written Directive

### Guidance

Creating an SOP template should be the first step in this process. This will help keep things organized. When crafting language, it should be plain and easy to follow.

### *Tips and Advice*

There are many free online templates available for ECCs to use.

If your ECC is a division of a first responder agency, a template likely exists already.

### Sample Language

Topic: Call Taking	Policy No: 3.1
Effective: 05/21/2018	Approved:
Revised: 06/01/2019, 06/21/2020, 05/23/2021	[Signature]

### *Answering Telephone Lines*

*911 emergency lines: hard lines, VoIP, wireless, and telematics.*

*All calls received on a 911 emergency line shall be answered in 15 seconds or less, per industry standards. 911 emergency lines shall be answered; “[Agency name] 911, what’s the address of the emergency?”*

## Test the Written Directive

### Guidance

Before implementing an SOP, have subject-matter experts review the content. Seek feedback from frontline staff or first responders, as applicable. Do not forget the training personnel in your agency. Ensure they have the tools they need to update and train ECC staff on the new directive. Be sure to conduct staff training before implementing the new or changed directive.

Check with leadership; ensure the SOP aligns with their expectations.

### Sample Language

*Having a change management process allows the ECCs to ensure SOPs are reviewed by the correct personnel before being published.*

- ✓ *This document has been circulated through ECC leadership, first responders, and staff for approval and to ensure it does not conflict with other established policies and procedures.*

*Tips and Advice*

Bringing subject-matter experts who use the SOPs every day and those impacted by them to the table will assure that the documented processes are accurate and relevant.

## Implement the Written Directive

**Guidance**

Once the SOP has been approved, it needs to be distributed to staff. Develop mechanisms that allow an employee to know that a new or updated SOP will be going into effect—before it goes into effect.

Having a document control process will help eliminate confusion on which is the most current version of the SOP.

*Tips and Advice*

When you publish an SOP, consider conducting a training class on the SOP or review in a shift briefing to ensure that your employees understand the content and can ask any questions.

**Sample Language**

N/A

## Availability of the Written Directive

**Guidance**

Determine how you will publish SOPs; it could be a hard copy or an electronic version. Either way, SOPs should be easily accessible.

**Sample Language**

N/A

## Review Regularly

**Guidance**

As things change within the ECC, so should SOPs. Developing a mechanism to review, create, and update policies should be a part of this process.

**Sample Language**

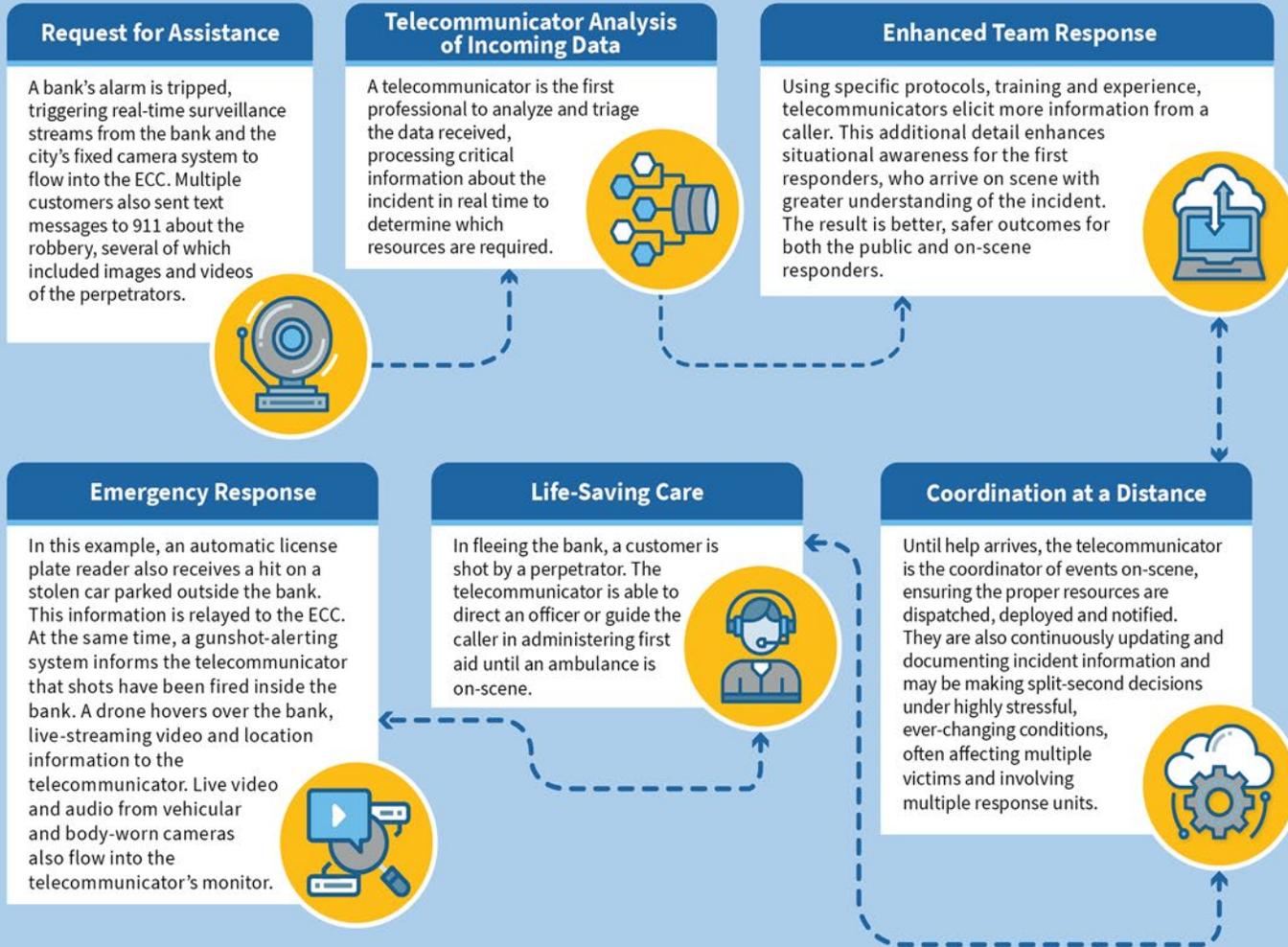
*SOPs will be updated annually. Policies, procedures, and technology will be reviewed, updated, and added for the next version.*

## Appendix B – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographics

The following two graphics can be used to illustrate how a PST is involved in all aspects of the emergency response team.

# THE CRITICAL ROLE OF TODAY'S PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS

Here is just one of countless scenarios a telecommunicator may handle at their emergency communications center (ECC) when a request for assistance comes in—and how they ensure every call is handled quickly, calmly and appropriately with skill and expertise:



To learn more about the work telecommunicators do and the public safety telecommunicator reclassification effort, go to [911.gov](https://911.gov).



# CONTINUUM OF A CALL

Work performed by a 911 public safety telecommunicator

## First Responder & Support All Aspects of the Call for Service

- ▶ Answers call for help from public and first responders
- ▶ Provides calm and empathy
- ▶ Interrogates and assesses response needs
- ▶ Provides first aid and basic emergency response verbally to ensure continuation of life
- ▶ Determines available and appropriate public safety (PS) response
- ▶ Communicates with PS, initiates field units, tracks response
- ▶ Monitors radio communications adding details to the call record
- ▶ Initiates additional response units or determines need
- ▶ Interprets GIS data to advise responding units
- ▶ Keeps responders safe by informing and controlling, uses judgment and training to escalate response as appropriate

## Field Responders

### Law Enforcement

- ▶ Traffic control for protection of secondary crashes, arrest, call for back up or additional units

### Fire Response

- ▶ Suppression, first aid, link between on scene assistance and full EMS

### Emergency Medical Services

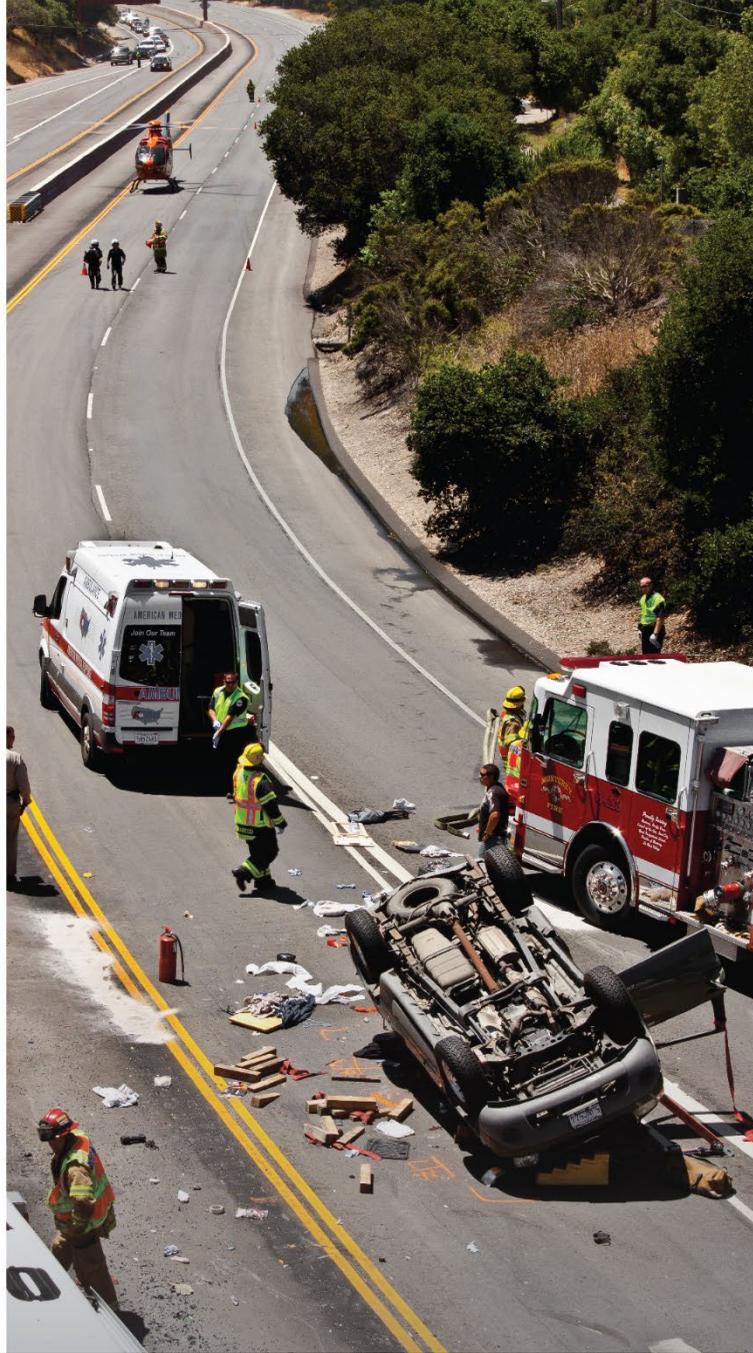
- ▶ Advanced first aid and life support; transport via ground or air

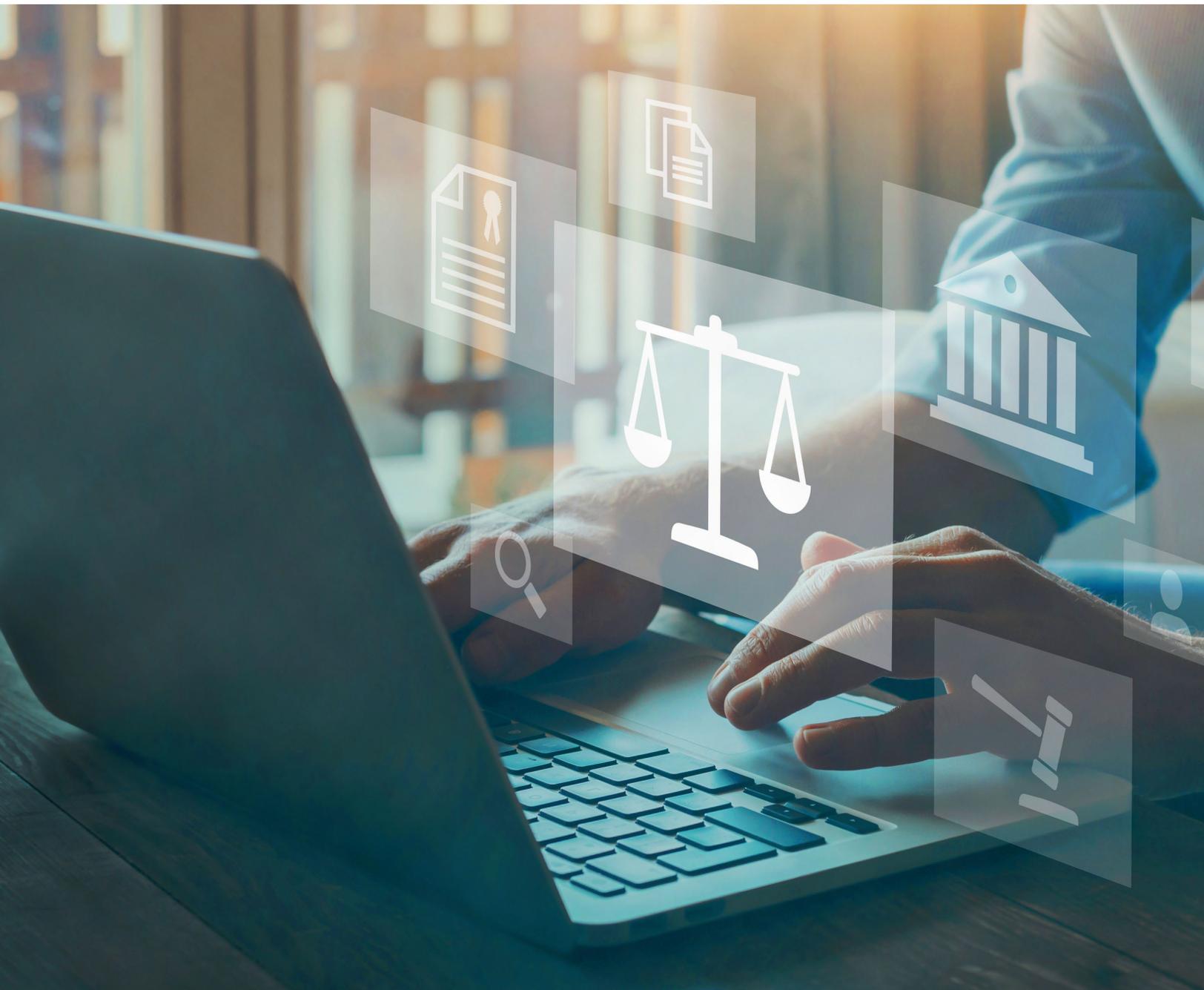
## Transport

- ▶ PST interprets GIS data
- ▶ Dispatches response vehicles such as ambulance or helicopter
- ▶ Monitors and relays impacting weather events or conditions to ensure safety of responders and victims

## Records & Legal

- ▶ Ensures call record accuracy
- ▶ Accurate time-stamp of 911 calls for future investigations
- ▶ Transfer to appropriate records systems
- ▶ Linking events





**Developing an Advocacy  
Strategy for Proper Classification  
May 2022**

## Acknowledgments

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA), National 911 Program, convened a working group of 911 professionals with a deep commitment to the individuals that are the first, "first responders" in any emergency. The Program provides the space to meet and the resources to assist these professionals to create the toolkit.

The goal of this toolkit is to provide public safety answering point (PSAP)/emergency communications center (ECC) leaders and decision-makers with a framework to help ensure adequate and complete job descriptions, training programs, operational documents, and advocacy efforts and/or legislation adequately reflect the evolving expectations of the public safety telecommunicator. Comprehensive and appropriate understanding of the critical protective work that is performed by the nation's PST is the first step in full appreciation of the significant role the PST plays in the public safety response continuum. As the entry point into the emergency response system, the PST is the initial responder in an event requiring police, fire or EMS response and the safety link for victims and public safety personnel alike.

This document, entitled "Guidelines for Developing an Advocacy Strategy for Proper Classification," provides steps that ECCs can take to prepare an advocacy strategy at state and local levels to advance appropriate classification efforts. It's "tools" can also begin to frame the conversation that the 911 community needs to have with their own leadership, policy makers, funders, their response partners (law enforcement, fire, EMS) and the general public to inform and educate about the critical life-saving work that is performed by the PST.

Thank you to the following industry experts who were integral in leading this effort and developing materials that will support future data-driven decisions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as a result of data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), state and local 911 agencies, and state and local policymakers. Without their contribution of time and expertise, this document would not be possible.

- Andrea Shepard, MBA, Montgomery County Emergency Communications District, Texas
- April Heinze, ENP, National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- Chad Chewing, Livingston County Central Dispatch / 911, Michigan
- Dan Henry, NENA: The 9-1-1 Association
- Daniel R. Morden, MSA, PEM, Gratiot County Central Dispatch Authority, Michigan
- Halcyon Frank, ENP, The Dispatch Lab
- Harriet Rennie-Brown, ENP, National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA)
- Jerry Eisner, RedSky Technologies
- Kevin Haight, Motorola Solutions, previously with Idaho State Police
- Mark Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Melissa Alterio, M.S., CPE, RPL, Cobb County Emergency Communications Department, Georgia
- Nathan Lee, Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Rosa Ramos, ENP, CMPC, Alameda County Regional Emergency Communications Center, California
- Roxanne VanGundy, ENP, RPL, Lyons County 911, Kansas
- Tony Leese, South East Regional Emergency Services Agency (SERESA), Michigan
- Ty Wooten, ENP, International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED), previously with NENA

# Table of Contents

1	Call to Action .....	1
2	Background .....	3
2.1	The Future .....	4
2.2	Why Proper Classification? .....	4
3	Advocating for Change .....	7
3.1	Define Your Goals and Develop a Communications Plan.....	7
3.2	Help Local Decision-makers Understand 911 .....	11
3.3	Create a Media Plan .....	12
3.4	Learn the Legislative or Classification Change Process .....	14
4	Next Steps .....	15
	Appendix A – Sample Talking Points for the Legislature .....	16
	Appendix B – Sample Advocacy “Leave Behind” Document.....	18
	Appendix C – Examples of Social Media Messaging .....	20
	Appendix D – Sample Press Release for Seeking Emergency Responder/Protective Services Designation.....	21
	Appendix E – Finding a Lobbyist/Advocate and Sample Request for Proposal .....	23
	Appendix F – Writing to a Policy Maker, Sample Letter .....	26
	Appendix G – Sample Resolution for NENA State Chapters .....	28
	Appendix H – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographics.....	29

# HISTORY

## Federal Classification

The United States (U.S.) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), under the Department of Labor, is responsible for the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data.

“Occupations are classified based on work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education and/or training needed to perform the work.” [Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines, 2018 SOC (bls.gov)]

## The Decisions to Not Reclassify

BLS ultimately was unable to reclassify because of the lack of objective, measurable data; thus, the 911 telecommunicator position remains classified under the Office and Administrative Support Occupation. The decision not to reclassify PSTs from the Office and Administrative Support Occupation to Protective Services was a blow to the industry and a campaign to increase the visibility of PSTs and their roles and responsibilities was undertaken.

## Moving Forward

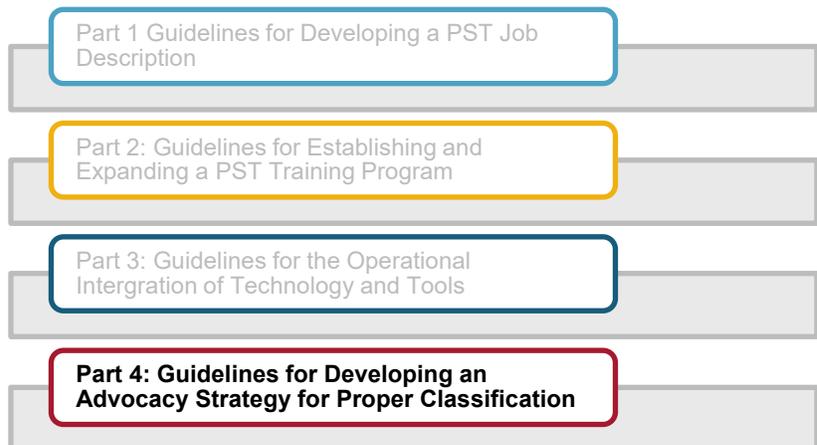
It is in the best interest of the 911 community to assemble objective data and information that can be used for the reclassification of the PST by updating job descriptions, training programs, and written directives to accurately depict job duties and responsibilities, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the modern PST.

For more information on the Toolkit visit [www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)

## 1 Call to Action

It is vital that when a person dials 911, they receive a consistent level of 911 service—no matter where they live or travel in the U.S. Consequently, there should be agreed-upon common elements that ensure the person who answers a 911 call has met baseline core competencies, and that the public will receive a standard level of expertise and professionalism when communicating with a public safety answering point (PSAP), an emergency communications center (ECC), or other emergency services providers<sup>1</sup>. This is increasingly the case, as states and localities increase the educational and training requirements for call taking and dispatch. However, the evolution of the protective work performed by the modern public safety telecommunicator (PST) often goes unrecognized in government, as policy and policymakers’ understanding of 911 lags years behind the current state of the 911 industry and the expectations of the public.

A toolkit has been developed to help ECCs take the necessary actions to support the change in job classification of public safety PSTs from clerical to **protective services**. The toolkit is comprised of four parts:



Throughout this document, we refer to 911 professionals as PSTs; however, different parts of the country use a variety of job titles.

The case for properly identifying the work performed by PST’s begins at the ECC. It includes acknowledgment of the importance of the PST

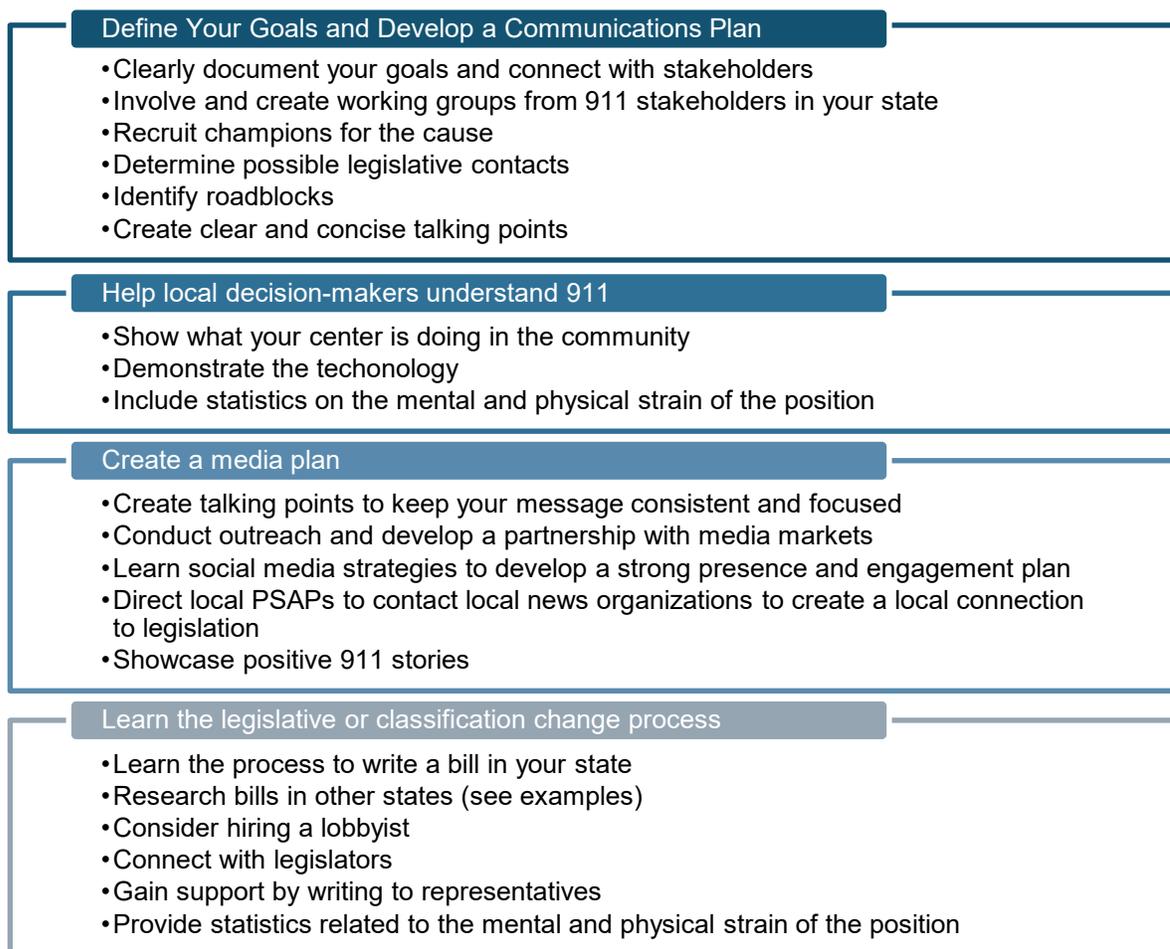
<sup>1</sup> Throughout the remainder of this document, ECC is intended to be synonymous with PSAP.

to the continuum of public safety response, the significance to the safety of the field responders and the victims involved in an incident, ensuring proper job descriptions, a comprehensive training program, and addressing technology and tool needed for today's PSTs. To support the change in job classification, ECCs are encouraged to read and act upon all four parts of the toolkit as desired.

This document, *Guidelines for Developing an Advocacy Strategy for Proper Classification*, is part four of the four-part toolkit. It addresses the steps every ECC can take to prepare for appropriate classification efforts, working with policymakers at all levels of government.

***This document is a call to action to consider legislative changes in your state to properly classify telecommunicators as the essential part of the public safety response team that they are.***

This toolkit is a guide to help you showcase your center, develop a media plan, and support learning the legislative process. The graphic below outlines Section 3 of this document, *Advocating for Change*. Further details are provided in this section.



## 2 Background

Each year hundreds of millions of calls are made to 911. The estimated 98,300<sup>2</sup> dedicated men and women who answer those calls are facing a time of great change as their careers, roles, and responsibilities move from a legacy environment to a Next Generation 911 (NG911) environment. They walk alongside citizens during the worst trauma of their lives. They protect both the callers and the field responders. Their roles in providing care include such tasks as:

- Helping to calm a terrified teenager hiding in a closet during a home invasion, while simultaneously providing information about the incident to field responders while they rush to the scene
- Directing a frightened caller on how to safely escape a burning building or take protective actions if they are trapped
- Providing first aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions to a panicked parent holding a lifeless child
- Hearing gunshots and discerning, screams, physical and emotional violence while working to calm the caller
- Relaying known hazards at an address to forewarn field responders of unstable persons, weapons on premise, previous events that required more heightened response units
- Processing their own acute and accrued trauma in the midst of a fast-paced, unpredictable, and often overstretched work environment

These dedicated professionals are trained to stay on the line during emergent situations, following complicated operational protocols and delivering time-sensitive, mission-critical dispatch communications; all while providing a sense of calm during what is often the worst moments of a caller's life. However, even with the expectations and stressful demands of the position and the risk management to life and property that they perform, they currently fall into a clerical/administrative job category for classification and reporting purposes.

At the federal level, the United States (U.S.) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is responsible for the data collection that supports and is used to determine Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, and disseminating data.<sup>3</sup> The data, used by OMB which has the ultimate responsibility of interpretation of the data and classification determinations. The classifications are reviewed every ten years, and in 2017 the efforts of 911 professionals failed to convince them to make a classification change due to a lack of objective, measurable data required to support reclassification of the PST profession. This document, as part four of the toolkit, is offered to help guide ECCs in efforts to change state and local policy to properly classify PSTs as the essential part of the public safety response team that they are; therefore, supporting the change in classification effort nationwide.

---

<sup>2</sup> Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers. Occupational Outlook Handbook. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/office-and-administrative-support/police-fire-and-ambulance-dispatchers.htm#tab-1>. Last accessed 01/09/2020.

<sup>3</sup> Standard Occupational Classification. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>. Last accessed 01/09/2020.

## 2.1 The Future

Much progress has been made nationwide to properly classify PSTs as part of the protective services at the state and local levels. According to the National Emergency Number Association's ([NENA](#)) Telecommunicator Reclassification Map webpage, several states and localities have passed bills that reclassify PSTs as first responders or other protective services designations and make them eligible for workers' compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).<sup>4</sup> As states and localities continue to classify PSTs as protective service workers, this can strengthen the case for reclassification at the federal level.

## 2.2 Why Proper Classification?

Nationwide, countless ECCs are significantly challenged to recruit and retain skilled and career-minded Emergency Communications Officers or PSTs. This is partly due to a lack of understanding of the degree of protective work that the PST performs and, as a result being an undervalued, undertrained, and under-compensated discipline. It also is likely affected by a grossly inaccurate job description for the position. Reclassification goals vary state by state, but there are many reasons why being classified as first responders or in a protective class is important for 911 professionals. Respect and recognition for this extremely challenging and vital job are lacking across the country. The title of first responder has been earned and has long been deserved. Additional factors that may be impacted positively with a protective services classification include hiring and retention in the field, wages and benefits that are commensurate with protective services work, retirement benefits, mental health resources, and a strengthening of training standards.

While some states have pursued a path to classifying PSTs as first responders, that is not the only path available to initiate a change in public policy. Protective service classification may be a more appropriate way to describe the life and property saving work that the PST does as we try to communicate the significance of the PST's role in the chain of survival. They are unseen for the most part; however, they view and communicate scene response (traffic cameras, body cameras, head-cameras on EMS responders, tactical dispatch operations activation, and the like) putting the PST "on the scene" experiencing the trauma just as assuredly as a field responder. This critical communications link is a vital part of every aspect of the call for service, and without it, nothing would occur. There would be no dispatch to the field, no relaying of a call for backup or additional resources as situations escalate, no notification to field units that there are known weapons at an address they are responding to, no CPR instructions when needed to save a life, no communication with the hospital that units are on the way with a critical patient because no dispatch was ever made. They are an essential link in the call record and are called upon by all the services to provide times, radio transmission detail, records and often testimony in court proceedings related to a call or incident. Without the 911 communications link, we would have no effective emergency response system. See the Continuum of a Call below for an illustration:

---

<sup>4</sup> [Telecommunicator Reclassification Map - National Emergency Number Association \(nena.org\)](#)

# CONTINUUM OF A CALL

Work performed by a 911 public safety telecommunicator

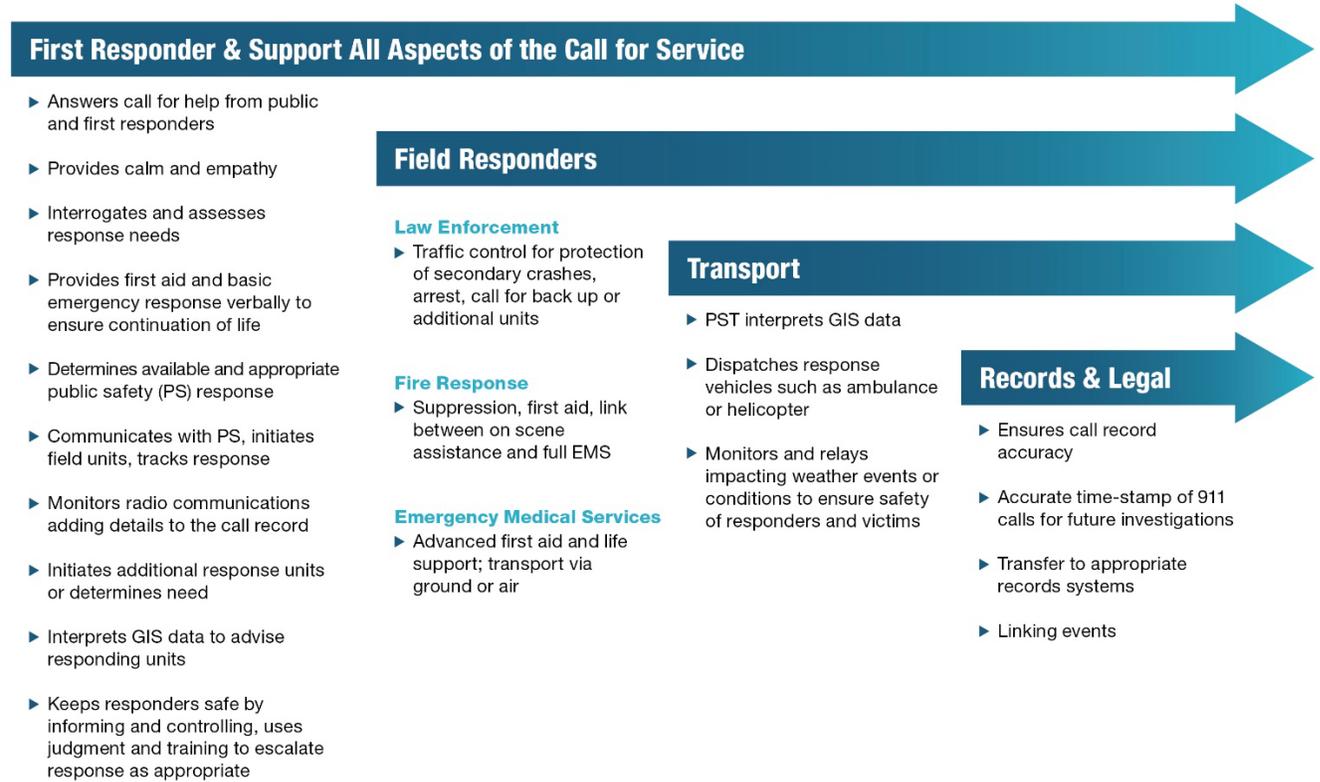


Figure 1: Telecommunicator Continuum of a Call



## 3 Advocating for Change

Some key tactics have been successful across the country in the quest to reclassify PSTs to a protective services classification. While every state is different, you will need an organized approach to be successful in your advocacy efforts, even if it is to properly describe, recognize, fund, or educate the public about the protective work performed by the PST. While organization and planning are crucial, there is no need to “reinvent the wheel.” Utilizing a strategy that has been successful for other states and modifying (or customizing) it to fit your situation is a great beginning.

**Policy changes require not just stories and narrative, but facts and data as well. Stories are memorable; facts are actionable.**

Both stories and facts are essential for a successful advocacy campaign. Your plan should include real-life experiences but should not rely solely on opinions or emotional pleas. Objective data and information are also necessary to form a solid basis for the appropriate classification. The process may be long and having a road map to follow will help keep your effort on track for the long haul. The steps below will help you compile and compose your strategic advocacy plan and can be a guide as you research and prepare the necessary information to move forward with your proper classification efforts.

### 3.1 Define Your Goals and Develop a Communications Plan

#### 3.1.1 Clearly Document Your Goals and Connect with Stakeholders

Creating a plan is an important step in organizing a PST classification effort within your state or locality. Create buy-in by establishing a working group of 911 stakeholders in your locale or state from the onset. Reach out to people who are passionate and informed about 911 and solicit their involvement in this initiative. It is incredibly important to involve stakeholders early in the process, so they feel invested in the project and to help you spread the word and gain support from their networks as well. When brainstorming possible stakeholders, think big and think broad, be creative and inclusive. Think about building the largest coalition possible. It's good to start with public safety partners but also reach out to all classes of professionals whose jobs are improved by the 911 system, such as criminal justice partners and medical partners (such as nurse's and physician's associations), as well as other non-public safety organizations who share the mission of protecting and saving lives and can be advocates such as the local chapters of the American Heart Association, American Red Cross, public health or the deaf and hard of hearing community and national 911 training organizations.

The list below is a starting point for compiling potential stakeholders, but there may be many more depending on your state:



Creating an appropriate stakeholder group is an important step in identifying the goals and developing a strategy for an appropriate classification effort and gaining champions for the cause. While engaging stakeholders can seem intimidating at times if a prior relationship does not exist. Now is the time to reach out and build these relationships. Below are some tools to help find and engage stakeholders.

- Larger associations often have policy committees that deal with public safety issues. Research this in your state and locality. This information may be listed on their website, or there may be a phone number to call for information. The website may also contain a list of board members and the issues on which they focus.
- Start locally. Local/County leaders may have a deeper network from which they can garner further support for reclassification. Reach out to a personal contact to help you bridge the gap to further associations.
- Identify if you or someone associated with this effort has a contact that has been through a similar process.
- Work your connections.
  - Start with whom you know and learn from them; this can build momentum for your cause.
  - Gather the names and contacts of these individuals who work with the identified stakeholder associations and reach out.
  - Invite them to a call that educates them and gets them involved in the goals and plans on how to move forward.
  - Plan several of these meetings throughout the process to keep stakeholders updated, involved, and invested.
- Send monthly update emails/communications.

- If there are objections, try to learn why they exist and address them early. Individuals/organizations initially perceived as “nay-sayers” can be helpful in identifying obstacles and challenges, so strategies can be developed to overcome them.
- Run this campaign loud and proud. Know that the process is not easy, but it is possible.

When gathering stakeholders, think big and broad. Be creative and inclusive. Build the largest coalition you can to help in this process. These people are already professionally invested in 911 and may have additional contacts within the state, including the legislature. Creating a working group is an important step as these people, individually or as a group, will act and do the “heavy lifting” down the road. Take extra time to consider, select, and approach the right individuals for this group. Tasks that the working group might be asked to accomplish, which require varying skillsets, are as follows:

- Assisting with creating the communications plan
- Creating and carrying out a media/public relations (PR) plan
- Writing legislation
- Communicating with legislators and/or other advocates
- Conducting community outreach

An effective plan begins with goals. The goals for proper classification should be understood by all stakeholders and documented. You need to understand and make clear what is being sought before you make the ask. Classification goals will be different in each state. Some goals may include the following:

- Recognition and respect for the profession
- Hiring best practices
- Training standards (i.e., creating a standard or strengthening one)
- PTSD legislation
- Wages and benefits commensurate with protective service work, including retirement options
- First responder benefits such as disaster benefits, pensions, mental health resources
- Increased autonomy of shift structures (optimal shift structures can be different depending on size/location).
- Availability of federal and local grants for first responders or other protective service workers.

These are just examples; your goals will be unique to your state and legislative climate.

### 3.1.2 Determine Possible Legislative Contacts

Along with clearly defined goals, you will need to determine the most appropriate person or group of people to communicate with and present your “ask” for a change in classification. It may include a legislative change. Determine if you have any legislative contacts with a connection to 911 (such as a volunteer responder in their local district), another local 911 champion, or someone who has sponsored other related public safety statute changes. Are there any legislative contacts on your local or state 911 board? Get to know your county lobbyist or advocacy person who works for your county board. Are there other groups in your state that work specifically with legislation? Research is important to determine if there

are individuals within your group that have a good relationship with local legislators or decision-makers, or their staff. These people can provide valuable feedback on how to navigate a classification change legislatively and how your advocacy strategies may need to be tailored. They may be willing to read your draft. They can also provide useful information about current policy priorities and develop strategies that are inclusive of broader circumstances that could influence action on the part of policymakers.

- Identify who/what agency oversees 911 in your locality/state (this is often a board or committee)
- Determine if there are legislative contacts on your board or if anyone on the board has legislative connections
- Ask legislative committee groups if they are willing to advocate for 911 related issues

Once you have identified legislative contacts and legislators, be sure to reach out a number of ways. Phone calls, writing letters and connecting via email can all lead to success. You may not hear back immediately. Contacting local legislators or their staff via email once a month is a way to keep them interested, engaged, informed and supportive of the cause.

### 3.1.3 Identify Roadblocks

It is important to identify known roadblocks during the early stages of advocacy planning. Are there groups that might not support the classification change effort? If so, part of your plan should include outreach strategies to educate those groups and strengthen relationships with them.

- Be prepared for questions and have data and facts available to share. Anticipate the objections to your effort and prepare response strategies in advance.
- Be aware of what you are asking for (money, title) and understand possible implications for other agencies in your state or the political implications of such a change.
- Be inclusive of associations that might present issues and create a mitigation plan to educate and work collaboratively.

There may be situations where you face opposition that cannot be mitigated despite your best efforts, and you may have to push your legislation without total support. The following table contains mitigation strategies that may assist in your efforts:

Mitigation Strategies	
Do your research	Understand the implications of the goals you have in mind for a classification change (e.g., how it would affect the retirement fund, is there a cost to taxpayers, etc.). Include possible mechanisms to address these implications as part of your strategy. It's more productive to suggest a solution than simply identify a challenge.

Mitigation Strategies	
Prepare data and facts	Do your homework to disarm what arguments may come up and work to understand the ramifications so you can accurately respond to questions and concerns.
Educate your champions	Help others understand to help strengthen your argument and inspire support for the cause.
Seek compromise	Develop an approach to reach a consensus between parties who may have differing viewpoints or opinions.
Have patience	Legislative efforts can take a long time, and if you are not successful in the first attempt, do not give up.
Stay positive	Put your message out there and know you are not alone in the effort.

3.1.4 Create Clear and Concise Talking Points

Your classification advocacy plan should include clear and concise talking points tailored for an audience that is not familiar with the responsibilities of a PST. These talking points should be created early and distributed often. It is important to involve as many people as possible with consistent messaging. Your talking points should consist of three to five reasons why proper classification of the PST is important, essential and necessary. Illustrate how this would impact a PST and how not being a part of the protective classification impacts your ECC and the people who work there. Remember, keep it short and sweet. It's important to avoid overwhelming your audience, especially in your initial conversations, so your initial talking points should only include what your audience needs to know. Talking point samples can be found in Appendix A, Sample Talking Points for the Legislature.

3.2 Help Local Decision-makers Understand 911

Your campaign's success will likely depend upon local decision-makers (such as a town manager or county executive) understanding the responsibilities of a PST and why a protective class designation is appropriate and imperative. Decision-makers need to understand the facts and statistics behind the ask, the rationale, the clarity in what the PST does to support the protection of life and property, as well as the mental and physical strain of the position.

Help local decision-makers understand why a protective class designation is needed by educating them on the functions a PST performs. Invite them to your centers, if possible, to immerse them in the environment. This may involve referring to your updated job descriptions to highlight the most important aspects of the work. (Reference part one of this four-part toolkit to learn more about creating updated job descriptions.) Additionally, part three of this toolkit highlights the different technologies that are used in ECCs daily; this

also may be useful as you create talking points. Getting state stakeholders onboard mitigates torpedoes to the classification change effort later. Engage public safety groups that represent chiefs of police and rank-and-file police, firefighters and their chiefs, sheriffs, emergency medical technicians and paramedics, prosecutors/district attorneys, and others. Remember that if you don't involve—or at least invite—these groups early, they may raise objections that they were excluded later in the process. Understand how these associations view the classification of the PST in your state and educate them early in the process. In most cases, the PST is their lifeline to safety while on the scene of an incident. There can be no better argument for proper classification of the work performed by the PST.

You may wish to consider these items for your talking points:

- Programs your 911 center offers the community
  - 911 education
  - Special needs awareness programs
  - Seniors/elderly programs
  - Mass notification
- Technology
  - NG911
  - Mapping
  - Emergency dispatch protocols for medical, fire, and law enforcement
  - Computer-aided dispatch (CAD)
- Mental and physical strain of the position
  - PTSD and suicide statistics
  - What your 911 center offers to support your PSTs

Educating elected officials is different from lobbying. You may be concerned about what you can and cannot say to an elected official, but educating an elected official is no different from providing instruction on 911 in a casual conversation. An advocacy plan should focus on education in increased understanding of the work performed by these public safety professionals.

Compile and save all of your documentation to create a packet that can be used to send out to people for educational purposes. This packet can be used for decision-makers but will also be useful for all stakeholders and champions of the cause. This documentation can also be used to educate employees in your center, especially new hires and recruits. A sample legislative informational guide is provided in Appendix B, Sample Advocacy “Leave Behind” Document.

### 3.3 Create a Media Plan

The power of the media for your advocacy effort should not be underestimated. Creating a media plan will require clear and concise talking points, which will differ from the talking points you use for legislators and decision-makers. These points must be consistent, focused, and targeted to the public-at-large rather than just lawmakers.

An initial step in creating a media plan should be meeting with directors and PSTs to gain input and buy-in on the media strategy and talking points. Buy-in will assure a united front, and a clear message as communications begin to occur. This meeting should be led by an individual or group that has a strong understanding of public safety needs at the state or local level (e.g., a state subcommittee, a local NENA/APCO<sup>5</sup> chapter, etc.).

Before outreach begins, the media strategy should be understood and adopted by as many ECCs as possible to have the biggest impact on the community.

Social media can be a powerful tool to reach several audiences through the reclassification process. If your center does not have a social media strategy, this is a good opportunity to start one with clear goals of educating decision-makers, the media, and the public. Creating social media team within your center or classification task force can help with the creativity, consistency, and effectiveness of your message. Also, consider having the state NENA and [APCO](#) chapters lead the charge by posting positive and impactful content on social media that ECCs can share. This helps create a consistent message and is convenient for ECCs that do not have availability or the staff to manage media. Asking PSTs to share their support for the measure on their social media will further the reach of the message and help them feel invested in the effort. Examples of social media posts can be found in Appendix C, Examples of Social Media Messaging.

While social media seems to be the easiest and most direct form of communication, it is important to reach out to large and small media markets in your area. Compile a media list that includes television, print, online, and radio stations. Often media contacts will have covered 911 previously and may be willing to assist with your campaign. Get involved with local news outlets early in the process and commit them to partner with the story. Assign ECC directors and leaders to contact local print sources such as newspapers. This will help create a local connection for garnering support for change to the appropriate classification strategy. An example press release for seeking proper PST classification can be found in Appendix D, Sample Press Release for Seeking Emergency Responder Designation or Protective Class Designation.

An important aspect of media and public outreach is clear directives on the type of information to share during your advocacy campaign. To grab attention and educate the public, showcase the positive impact that ECCs have in the community. Display your current projects, put 911 front and center, and create relevance. Share positive stories on social media, organize a press release, or reach out to your media contacts; do not wait for National Telecommunicator Week. Examples could include life-saving events such as childbirth assisted, CPR, or first aid instructions by a PST or new technology, training efforts, or community service activities. Reach out to community members to see if they would be willing to share saves and showcase them in your media campaign.

---

<sup>5</sup> Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International

### 3.4 Learn the Legislative or Classification Change Process

Learning about your state's legislative or classification change process is critical to updating, changing, or writing new legislation or any advocacy effort to properly classify the PST in protective services category. Every state/locality has a unique process. Understanding this process and learning how to write a bill or advocate for a classification change will save you time and effort by following the process correctly. Research associations in your state that draft legislation and that might be able to educate you and/or connect you with the appropriate persons.

**Research existing laws in your state/locality.** Additionally, research current bills that involve the term “first responder” or protective services to see if 911 is included and how that may impact your center. In some states, the terms emergency/first responder/protective services can be interchangeable. It is important to understand what currently exists in law and be proactive in understanding what role 911 would play if reclassified. You may be able to utilize existing bills that include the term first responder or protective services to help craft your verbiage. Use consistent language with other 911-related bills in your state to ensure consistency among bills that already exist.

**Research other professional associations and their work.** Remember, you're not the first interest group to try to affect legislation or classification changes! Numerous resources exist for better understanding the legislative process in your state; many of them may have been created by other interest groups. Find other associations in your state — even those outside public safety—that have experience in the legislative process. These associations include those representing teachers, pharmacists, electricians, or other working professions. They may have already created advocacy guidance for their members (or “grassroots”) or even be willing to help you learn the ropes.

**Search out clerks of the legislature and other “in-house” resources.** Many states have a clerk of the legislature who can be an incredible resource to help you understand the legislative process in your state. Reach out to your state office as this position may be called something different in each state. This office can offer educational sessions upon request. State legislative bodies may also have *legislative counsel*, a nonpartisan or semi-partisan position who offers guidance to legislators and stakeholders on the legal implications and procedural requirements of proposed policy changes.

**Take cues from reclassification efforts and bills in other states.** Research bills in other states, even if they haven't been passed (remember, *good bills fail all the time*). While your language will not precisely reflect another state's bill, you may be able to utilize some language. Often you will not need to begin from scratch when you have strong examples of successful language as a starting point or the ability to amend current legislation. Examples of bills from states that have successfully reclassified PSTs can be found in Appendix E, Finding a Lobbyist and Sample Request for Proposal.

**Consider a lobbyist.** State and/or regional groups should consider hiring a lobbyist. A lobbyist is a professional who advocates for a particular side of an issue to influence political decisions. They are professional government relations experts. Lobbyists are often hired to assist in proposing new legislation or amending existing legislation. Lobbyists often have connections to decision-makers and understand the legislative process in a respective state. States or regions can leverage lobbyists' existing relationships

and can help build relationships where there are none. Lobbyists often have valuable experience that they can lend to your reclassification advocacy. Finding the right lobbyist requires time and research, and even once you settle on one, they may not always be the right fit. Be diligent in your search and relationship with your lobbyist to ensure you are getting what you need. Frequently asked questions regarding lobbyists and a sample RFP for hiring a lobbyist can be found in Appendix E, Finding a Lobbyist and Sample Request for Proposal.

**Activate your grassroots.** A letter-writing campaign to your state/local representatives is an important aspect of pursuing legislative/classification change. Encourage the 911 professionals in your state to support the effort by writing to their local representatives. Start at the local level. Do this as early in the process as possible—often as soon as your core policy and strategy working group has settled on talking points. Use the talking points created for a change in classification and share them with the 911 community. This presents a united front and provides for further advocacy on classification change and its importance. Include facts and figures about the job, the job description, the life and property saving tasks performed on the job and personal stories in the writing campaign. Information on writing to a legislator can be found in Appendix F, Writing to a Policy Maker, Sample Letter. Additionally, a sample resolution for state chapters to approve and send to members of their state legislative delegations is provided in Appendix G, Sample Resolution for NENA State Chapters

## 4 Next Steps

Pursuing legislative or classification change is an arduous process: it takes time, patience, hard work, and perseverance. There are often roadblocks, changes in direction, and sometimes starting anew. This document exists to help minimize the objections and point you in the right direction with confidence. Perhaps your state or locality does not know where to begin or has hit a stumbling block. Creating an advocacy plan, involving stakeholders, creating buy-in, and following the appropriate process steps in your state can position your state or locality for success.

Use this document as a roadmap in your planning and advocacy strategy. With your updated job descriptions, training, and standard operating procedures (SOPs), as detailed in other parts of this toolkit, you can blend your success stories and market your ECC to the public and policy change agents.

The more prepared and organized your state is in the process, the more you will elevate your state's ability to succeed—moving through the process with confidence and resiliency.

## Appendix A – Sample Talking Points for the Legislature

The legislature needs to understand the function of PSTs in ECCs today. They will need an overview that includes everything from technology, to scheduling, to overtime. You will need to help them understand the huge technology changes that are coming with NG911 and how that further changes the job of a PST. You will need to paint the picture of how benefits differ for PSTs as compared to those classified as first responders or other protective services fields.

When educating the legislature, it is important to illustrate how classification change can create standards and better training, which leads to a better quality of service to the public to their constituents. Below are some sample talking points to explain to the legislature why reclassification is important.

### **Talking Points – Why Seek Protective Services classification?**

Protective Services classification does not guarantee better pay, better benefits, more staff, or better training. But it does pave the way for PSTs to be recognized and accepted into the same field of work as first responders or protective services professionals.

1. Recruitment and Retention
  - a. Today, PST jobs are not packaged as a long-term career path but rather a job or stepping-stone to a “career” with a traditional first responder agency. Becoming classified for the work PSTs truly do can be a more accurate representation of what an applicant is deciding to apply for.
  - b. Giving an ECC the ability to create minimum requirements to become a PST when there are no official hiring minimums or standardization through the state.
    - i. Experience in different areas
    - ii. Age limitations
    - iii. Convictions vs. no convictions
    - iv. Creating moral and ethical behavior standards within EOCs
    - v. Minimum requirements could enhance community trust
2. A Foot in the Door in the Capital
  - a. A better ability to advocate for technology needs and funding needs as protective services. Being reclassified could help PSTs secure more than is possible as administrative workers statewide.
    - i. Future increases in 911 rates
    - ii. Future development of workmen’s comp benefits for PTSD and other mental illnesses for first responders or other protective services in your state
    - iii. Addressing deficiencies in retirement plans
3. Next Pandemic?
  - a. During COVID, many PSTs across the country struggled. At first, many were denied priority testing because we didn’t have “contact with the public.”

- b. PSTs did not know if ECCs were included in economic relief initiatives that essential personnel were eligible for.
  - c. Vaccinations. Not all PSTs around the country were eligible for priority vaccinations.
  - d. No emergency communicator should have uncertainty or be in limbo during a national or statewide crisis.
4. Professionalizing the Profession.
- a. Future quality of service standardization. ECCs may have a training level that the adjacent county does not.
    - i. Training standards
    - ii. Training certification at the start of employment
    - iii. Training standardization creates community trust. Even if a standard already exists, it allows agencies to state that they are a first responder or other protective services agency with required training standards that exceed the minimum allowable.
  - b. Changes internal practices
  - c. Culture shifts
    - i. PSTs are no longer “just dispatchers.” PSTs have a meaningful place in the life safety and protective services process.
5. At some point, this could impact our ability to pay our staff more.
6. Mental Health
- a. A 2019 study hosted by Fairfax County Police showed that 14.5% of Public Safety Communications personnel who had responded to their survey had had suicidal thoughts within the last year. By comparison, the rate of suicidal thoughts in the United States is only 3%. Suicidal thoughts are often linked to other problems such as depression. COVID-19 has only increased the level of stress 911 professionals face. A NENA survey showed that 40% of 911 professionals felt more stressed due to the pandemic than before.<sup>6</sup>
  - b. “Recent studies of 9-1-1 profession-related stress and mental health impacts show that 9-1-1 industry professionals are exposed to various levels of trauma and work-related stress. One study even showed that 17%-24% of telecommunicators in the United States exhibited symptoms of probable Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and 23.9% exhibited symptoms of probable major depression.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> 2019 Virginia Public Safety Mental Health Pilot Survey. <http://fcop5000.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-Fairfax-County-Police-Pilot-Survey-Summary.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Excerpt from *NENA Peer Support Team Development, Implementation, and Oversight* NENA-INF-044.1-2021, April 21, 2021. Study reference: Lilly Michelle M. and Christy E. Allen. 2015. “Psychological Inflexibility and Psychopathology in 9-1-1 Telecommunicators.” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. 28(3):262-266. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1002/jts.22004>

## Appendix B – Sample Advocacy “Leave Behind” Document

\*\*\*911 Logo Here\*\*\*

### Who We Are:

- Explain who you are as a 911 organization
- How/what you do you serves and protects the community?
  - Example: “The association serves its members and the greater public safety community as the only professional organization solely focused on 911 policy, technology, operations, and education issues.”
- How do you promote awareness of 911 work performed?
- What is the mission of your agency?

### 911 FACTS

#### 911 Emergency Communications provided in the State of **STATE**:

- How many PSAPs?
- How many backup PSAPs
- Geographic area served

#### Explain how 911 is funded in your state/jurisdiction:

The funding sources for 911 service include:

- Surcharges
- Wireline services fees
- Wireless service fees
- Prepaid emergency service fees
- Any other type of applicable fee that feeds 911

#### The Future of 911:

- Nationally, Next Generation 911 (NG911) is recognized by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Commerce (DOC), and the NHTSA National 911 Program Office (jointly administered by the USDOT [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA] and National Telecommunications and Information Administration [NTIA])
- Reclassification goals
- Technology and customer service are needed to provide assistance to citizens from Any Device, Any Time, & Anywhere

#### Legislative Policy Priorities (**insert year**):

- Priority One
  - Details

- Priority Two
  - Details
- Priority Three
  - Details
- Priority Four
  - Details

**To learn more about 911 emergency communications:**

- Visit (your organization's website)
- [www.nena.org](http://www.nena.org) or [www.apcointl.org](http://www.apcointl.org) (as appropriate)
- Schedule a tour of a 911 center in your district
- Reach out to 911 professionals in your district

**Organization 911** leaders in your district are here to help! To find out more about 911 or to schedule a visit to a local 911 center, please contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

911 Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C – Examples of Social Media Messaging

Information sharing with the public can be a huge asset during a classification change effort. One method of public information sharing that has seen great success for states and localities is the use of social media. Building a social media campaign takes commitment and consistency. If your state or localities does not yet have a social media presence, now is the right time to start one. If one is already established, utilize what exists to share information and build followers. The more people you can engage and reach from your platform, the better. Social media can bring a significant increase in attention.

There are many examples of 911 centers and state 911 programs across the country that run successful social media accounts. You can usually find them by searching hashtags related to 911 or reclassification. Helpful and well-presented posts can lead to more engagement. Examples of social media posts related to the reclassification effort can be found on 911.gov in the Documents and Tools section.

# Appendix D – Sample Press Release for Seeking Emergency Responder/Protective Services Designation

## PRESS RELEASE

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Logo here

**State** Chapters of APCO and NENA

Address 1

Address 2

### RELEASE DATE:

**Month Day, Year**

## **State 911 Professionals Seek Emergency Responder/Protective Services Designation**

Protecting the Dedicated Voices on the Other End of Your Emergency

**Location, Date** — No one anticipates a situation that requires a 911 call. Though, over **XXXX** Public Safety Telecommunicators in the state of **State** choose a career as the crucial first point of contact in life-or-death situations. In a fleeting instant, their actions can determine the outcome of someone's worst day.

The **State** Chapters of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) are currently working together to introduce legislation seeking **State** public safety telecommunicators to be recognized as first responders or as part of protective services classification.

Currently, on the federal level, telecommunicators are defined as clerical workers. On the state level, no statute in **[name of state]** currently defines telecommunicators in any capacity, and existing definitions of Emergency or First Responder or other Protective Services designations do not include them. We would like **[name of State]** to join the other states who have made that designation.

During the early stages of COVID-19, this became a frustration point within the 911 community. There was much confusion on the state level as to whether telecommunicators were essential or vital when it came to vaccines, the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome (HERO) Act or the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Local jurisdictions were left to decide on their own, and dozens of different interpretations and perspectives added to the confusion and uncertainty. Several centers were hit hard by the pandemic, forcing them to come up with alternative methods to process emergency calls amid critical staffing shortages.

Public safety telecommunicators are highly trained individuals and routinely communicate with citizens who are in great distress, fear or injured. They provide life-saving services. They can coach callers through a mental health crisis, how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), clear airways or deliver a baby, collect information to provide situational awareness for responders and negotiate in hostile situations. They perform critical life-saving duties in the field as incident tactical dispatchers (INTD) for the special weapons and tactics unit (SWAT) and fire, communications unit leaders and technicians, and the telecommunicator emergency response taskforce (TERT) assistance to public safety answering points (PSAPs) in disasters. They are the safety link for responders monitoring communications, responding to calls for backup or additional units, and providing information from other responders that are critical to the safety of on scene responders.

This designation will give telecommunicators the recognition they deserve for the job they perform as the first, “first responder” as an essential part of the public safety response continuum. There is no pay or benefit impact, as that is a local decision, and there are no training or certification requirements in the legislation, although that discussion could come later. The same could be said for including telecommunicators in the movement to declare post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a worker’s compensation injury in [name of State].

Legislation has been presented to the Office of the XXXX by Senator XXXX. The members of the [name of State] APCO and NENA Chapters are hopeful that a bill can move forward in this legislative session with the support of the public, as well as you as first responders and elected officials. Once a bill is crafted, the bill number will be provided so you can lend your support.

By designating public safety telecommunicators as first responders or part of the protective services class, [name of State] would be sending a powerful message nationwide that it supports our 911 professionals by recognizing the life-saving work that each of them performs every day.

###

## Appendix E – Finding a Lobbyist/Advocate and Sample Request for Proposal

### **Where do we start when considering a lobbyist/advocate?**

- Each state/locality is different regarding laws and funds to secure lobbyists. You need to research your jurisdiction's website for rules on lobbying and lobbyists.
- Understand what your organization/group wants or needs from local (municipal/county), state or federal lobbyists.
- Know that whom you hire works for you, they need your views and interests, they should stay in constant communication.
- Remember that lobbyists open doors to legislators and their staff. However, you are the subject matter expert.
- Creating a new law is difficult and can be expensive. Amending an existing law is a little easier but can still be tough. A lobbyist helps to navigate this process.

### **What are some considerations when hiring a lobbyist or other advocate?**

Find out if the potential lobbyist, group or organization belongs to a trade association that already conducts government relations/lobby activities at the local, state, or federal level. Many times, mistakes are made when a group hires a lobbyist and expects them to “fix” things on their own. Most lobbyists will engage the client and request direction and understanding of the issues, and over time the lobbyist will have a better understanding of the client's concerns. In order to ensure this, the client must give and demand attention to their issue/concern from the lobbyist. Do not hire a lobbyist and assume they are working in a vacuum to get the work done. Require a steady flow of information to and from the lobbyist. Also, it is recommended to give the lobbyist has one point of contact.

### **Can you hire lobbyists for certain legislative sessions?**

Yes, but this could increase costs to the organization. Additionally, many of the relationships and/or access to elected officials and their staff occurs in the interim. Typically, a “session-only” lobbyist monitors the legislative activity and does not engage in any “fixes” until a problem arises for the client, typically in a filed bill or amendment.

### **Are lobbyists tied to only promoting the agenda you are asking them to promote, or do they have the freedom to negotiate things with other legislators/or lobbyists without your approval?**

Lobbyists typically promote the client agenda only. Again, communication to and from the lobbyist is essential.

## Sample Request for Proposal for a Lobbying Firm

(Insert Agency or Group Name) is seeking proposals from professional firms with public policy expertise, particularly 911 emergency telecommunications policy, to conduct a review of policy issues impacting emergency telecommunications interests in the State of (Insert State Name) and to provide monitoring on an ongoing basis. Also, as needed, advocate on key issues as identified by the policy review and our client interests.

## Background

Provide information about your agency, what you do, what your goals are and the outcome of these goals. Example: (Insert name) represents (Insert Agency or Group Name) operating emergency telecommunications technology services and infrastructure in (Insert State Name) who are seeking to create and protect the citizens they serve by proactively understanding, monitoring, and taking appropriate actions on policy matters pertaining to telecommunications and public safety to meet fiduciary, technology infrastructure, and public safety goals.

## Scope of Work

1. Provide specific information with regard to the form of service that can be expected (i.e., drafting legislation, creating/managing coalition, arranging meetings/calls with policymakers and/or their staff, monitoring ongoing actions). Scope and assess telecommunications and technology policy issues regulated or influenced by the (Insert State Name) Government relative to emergency telecommunication public safety providers and opportunities to mitigate risk, including the below components:
  - a. Identify state-level emergency telecommunications and advocacy organizations in (Name State Here) and identify the key public policy issues of concern to each organization.
  - b. Utilizing the below issues considering (1) threats and opportunities to the industry, (2) ability to influence, and (3) current state-of-play.
    - i. Emergency Telecommunications Funding
    - ii. Emergency Telecommunications Practices & Management
    - iii. Emerging Telecommunications Technology
    - iv. Emergency Telecommunications Market and U.S. Mandates
  - c. Potential Near-Term Actions by the (Insert State Here) Legislature and Executive Branch
  - d. Assessment should exclude policy issues impacting emergency telecommunications and focus on issues affecting public safety.
2. Ongoing monitoring and policy support on identified issues and, as needed, direct lobbying and advocacy. Issue monitoring should include any resources needed to properly brand (Insert Agency or Group Name) short of any direct lobbying and advocacy.

## Work Product

Statewide assessment of emergency telecommunications policy issues (Item 1 from Scope of Work) completed by (Insert Date), unless otherwise agreed.

1. Ongoing monitoring and policy support are commencing on **(Insert Date)** or at the beginning of the legislative session.
2. Monthly updates are delivered by the **(Insert Date Here)** of each month of the legislative session.
3. Post-session summary and assessment delivered within 30 days of adjournment.
4. Bi-monthly updates after session adjournment.

**Budget**

**(Insert Agency or Group Name)** strongly prefers a monthly retainer format for this work. Proposals should include the anticipated budget that identifies individuals involved in developing the state assessment and conducting the monitoring and policy support, any data acquisition costs, and any anticipated travel or miscellaneous costs.

**Proposal Deadline**

Proposals should be submitted to the email address below by **(Insert Time and Date)**

**Email Address**

## Appendix F – Writing to a Policy Maker, Sample Letter

Sample Protective Services classification Letter:

[Your Letterhead]

[Date]

The Honorable [Representative]  
State General Assembly (or other, if applicable)  
[Representative's Address]

Dear Representative [Representative's Last Name],

I write today to ask that you support [name of legislator] by cosponsoring/supporting the 911 [name of bill (bill number)]. This bill would classify public safety telecommunicators (911 call takers and dispatchers) as “Protective Service Occupations” instead of their current classification, “Office and Administrative Support Occupations.”<sup>8</sup>

[Optional: Your story here. Things to touch on:

(1) Your public safety answering point's (PSAP's) connection to the district, e.g., “[My PSAP] serves x, which covers over xxx residents and visitors,”

(2) A brief overview of your PSAP, e.g., “[My PSAP] employs x dispatchers.”

(3) the nature of the life and property protective work your telecommunicators and dispatchers perform, e.g., “Telecommunicators here use emergency medical dispatch to help 911 callers administer Epinephrine ...” any data points or anecdotes to highlight the unique and challenging nature of the work] Be sure to mention the clear link between what a PST does and how it protects the public, the victim, the field responder as well as property.

The 911 telecommunicators and dispatchers in our community are critically important public safety personnel. On any given day, they may provide emergency medical instruction, instruct how to clear airways for breathing or apply pressure to a wound to contain blood loss, walk a caller through CPR, deal with suicidal persons, analyze background noises and a caller's voice to assess a situation, or coordinate the dispatch and safe arrival of police, fire, and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel.

[State how you relate to the district, e.g., “As director of a PSAP that serves your district,” or “As a resident of your district”]. I'm writing to request your support of the [name of legislation]. It has broad support throughout the 911 community, including the endorsement of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA): The 9-1-1 Association. Put simply, the [name of legislation] is good governance and much-deserved recognition for the estimated 100,000 public safety telecommunicators in our country.

---

<sup>8</sup> Public Safety Telecommunicators (also referred to as Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers) are Occupation 43-5031, currently classified under Major Occupation Category 43-0000, “Office and Administrative Support Occupations.” “Protective Service Occupations” is Major Occupation Category 33-0000. U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, 2018 STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM, [https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major\\_groups.htm#](https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major_groups.htm#).

The bill's sponsors—and the 911 community—would gladly welcome any support of the House and Senate bills. For more information, please contact [appropriate contact names and emails].

Please let us know if we may ever be of assistance to you in the future.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Role]

[Your Organization]

[Your Address]

## Appendix G – Sample Resolution for NENA State Chapters

### SAMPLE RESOLUTION FOR NENA STATE CHAPTERS TO APPROVE AND SEND TO MEMBERS OF THEIR STATE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATIONS

The following is draft language for a resolution that NENA encourages its chapter leaders to consider, refine as you wish, officially approve, put on your letterhead, and send to the members of your state's legislative delegation.

#### RESOLUTION: CALLING UPON MEMBERS OF THE {name of state legislative body} TO SUPPORT THE [name of legislation]

The following resolution was approved by the Board of Directors of [NAME OF YOUR NENA CHAPTER] on [DATE]:

**Whereas** the state government's [name of state system for classifying occupations] sorts workers into occupational categories according to the nature of the work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education, or training needed to perform the work; and

**Whereas** America's 911 telecommunicators are currently incorrectly categorized in the [name of state system for classifying occupations] as an "Office and Administrative Support Occupation," a category which includes secretaries, office clerks, taxicab dispatchers; and

**Whereas** classifying 911 telecommunicators as an "Office and Administrative Support Occupation" fails to recognize their central role in public safety and homeland security, their specialized training and skills, their uniquely stressful work environment; and

**Whereas** classifying public safety telecommunicators as "Protective Service Occupations" – alongside police, firefighters, security guards, lifeguards, and others whose job it is to protect our communities – would better reflect the work they perform and align the SOC with related classification systems;

**Now, therefore**, this board resolves to call upon all members of the [state name] Legislature to reclassify public safety telecommunicators as a "Protective Service Occupation," and we also call upon our state Senators to support companion legislation; and

**Therefore**, members of [NAME OF YOUR NENA CHAPTER] will continue to advocate for an accurate statistical classification for 911 professionals to support critical research into the nature and impacts of 911 jobs, which differ substantially from those encountered by non-public-safety "Office and Administrative Support Occupations."

Signed,

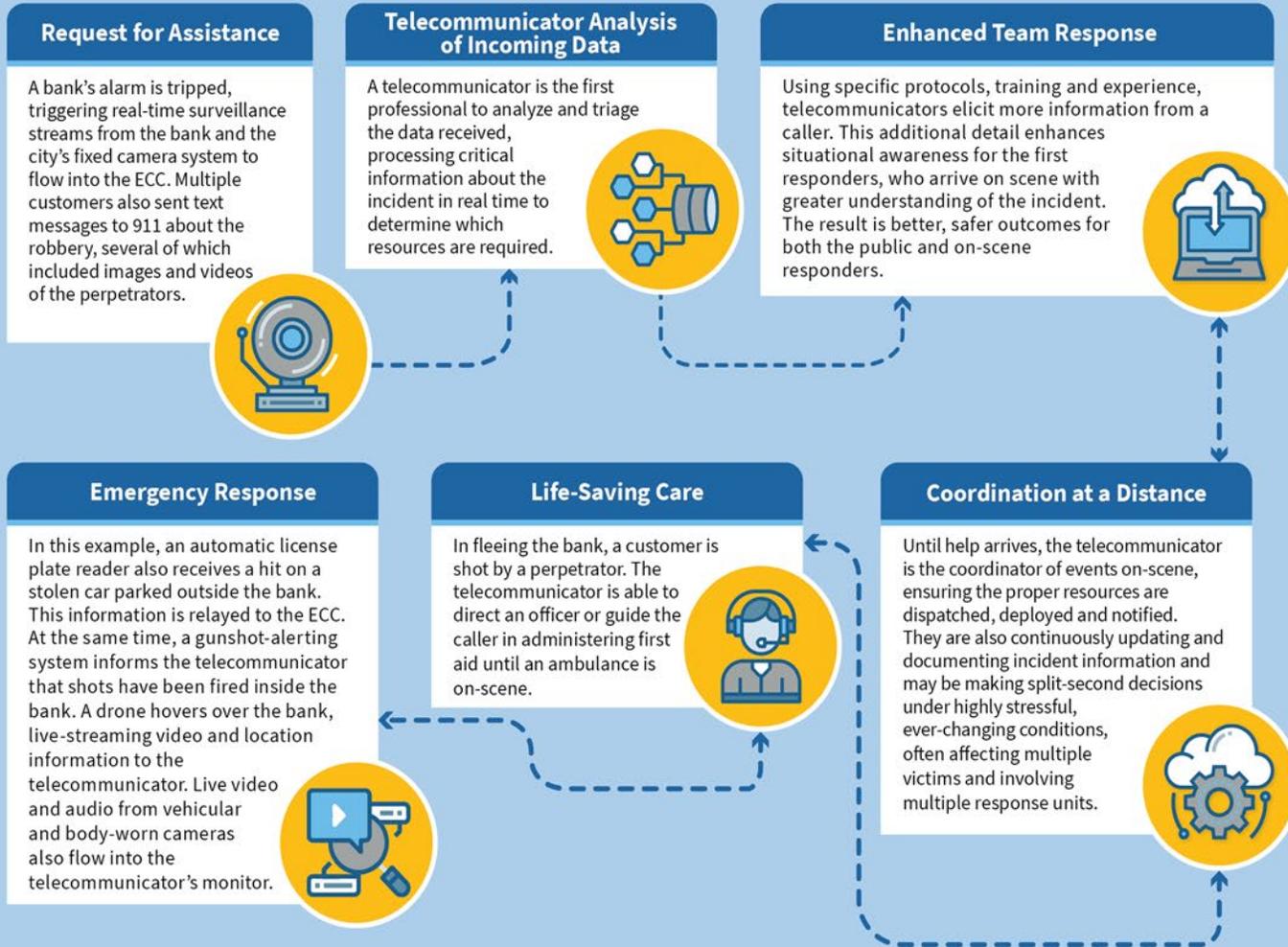
[Names and Titles of Signatories]

## Appendix H – Public Safety Telecommunicator Infographics

The following two graphics can be used to illustrate how a PST is involved in all aspects of the emergency response team.

# THE CRITICAL ROLE OF TODAY'S PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS

Here is just one of countless scenarios a telecommunicator may handle at their emergency communications center (ECC) when a request for assistance comes in—and how they ensure every call is handled quickly, calmly and appropriately with skill and expertise:



To learn more about the work telecommunicators do and the public safety telecommunicator reclassification effort, go to [911.gov](https://911.gov).



# CONTINUUM OF A CALL

Work performed by a 911 public safety telecommunicator

## First Responder & Support All Aspects of the Call for Service

- ▶ Answers call for help from public and first responders
- ▶ Provides calm and empathy
- ▶ Interrogates and assesses response needs
- ▶ Provides first aid and basic emergency response verbally to ensure continuation of life
- ▶ Determines available and appropriate public safety (PS) response
- ▶ Communicates with PS, initiates field units, tracks response
- ▶ Monitors radio communications adding details to the call record
- ▶ Initiates additional response units or determines need
- ▶ Interprets GIS data to advise responding units
- ▶ Keeps responders safe by informing and controlling, uses judgment and training to escalate response as appropriate

## Field Responders

### Law Enforcement

- ▶ Traffic control for protection of secondary crashes, arrest, call for back up or additional units

### Fire Response

- ▶ Suppression, first aid, link between on scene assistance and full EMS

### Emergency Medical Services

- ▶ Advanced first aid and life support; transport via ground or air

## Transport

- ▶ PST interprets GIS data
- ▶ Dispatches response vehicles such as ambulance or helicopter
- ▶ Monitors and relays impacting weather events or conditions to ensure safety of responders and victims

## Records & Legal

- ▶ Ensures call record accuracy
- ▶ Accurate time-stamp of 911 calls for future investigations
- ▶ Transfer to appropriate records systems
- ▶ Linking events

